ESSAYS

BY

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

BRIAR CLIFF COLLEGE
SIOUX CITY, IOWA

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ESSAYS

BOOKS BY
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Fiction

PARNASSUS ON WHEELS
THE HAUNTED BOOKSHOP
KATHLEEN
TALES FROM A ROLLTOP DESK
WHERE THE BLUE BEGINS
PLEASED TO MEET YOU
PANDORA LIFTS THE LID
(with Don Marquis)
THE ARROW
THUNDER ON THE LEFT
I KNOW A SECRET

Essays

SHANDYGAFF
MINCE PIE
PIPEFULS
PLUM PUDDING
TRAVELS IN PHILADELPHIA
THE POWDER OF SYMPATHY
INWARD HO!
RELIGIO JOURNALISTICI
THE ROMANY STAIN
ESSAYS
OFF THE DEEP END
SEACOAST OF BOHEMIA

Poetry

THE BOWLING GREEN
SONGS FOR A LITTLE HOUSE
THE ROCKING HORSE
HIDE AND SEEK
CHIMNEYSMOKE
PARSON'S PLEASURE
TRANSLATIONS FROM THE CHINESE
TOULEMONDE

Plays

ONE-ACT PLAYS

ESSAYS

By

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Harlington, 1890 - 1957

BRIAR CLIFF COLLEGE
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1927

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ESSAYS

A QUESTION OF PLUMAGE

KENNETH STOCKTON was a man of letters, and correspondingly poor. He was the literary editor of a leading metropolitan daily; but this job only netted him fifty dollars a week, and he was lucky to get that much. The owner of the paper was powerfully in favour of having the reviews done by the sporting editor, and confining them to the books of those publishers who bought advertising space. This simple and statesmanlike view the owner had frequently expressed in Mr. Stockton's hearing, so the latter was never very sure how long his job would continue.

But Mr. Stockton had a house, a wife, and four children in New Utrecht, that very ingenious suburb of Brooklyn. He had worked the problem out to a nicety long ago. If he did not bring home, on the average, eighty dollars a week, his household would cease to revolve. It simply had to be done. The house was still being paid for on the in-

stallment plan. There were plumbers' bills, servant's wages, clothes and schooling for the children, clothes for the wife, two suits a year for himself, and the dues of the Sheepshead Golf Club —his only extravagance. A simple middle-class routine, but one that, once embarked upon, turns into a treadmill. As I say, eighty dollars a week would just cover expenses. To accumulate any savings, pay for life insurance, and entertain friends, Stockton had to rise above that minimum. If in any week he fell below that figure he could not lie abed at night and "snort his fill," as the Elizabethan song naïvely puts it.

There you have the groundwork of many a domestic drama.

Mr. Stockton worked pretty hard at the newspaper office to earn his fifty dollars. He skimmed faithfully all the books that came in, wrote painstaking reviews, and took care to run cuts on his literary page on Saturdays "to give the stuff kick," as the proprietor ordered. Though he did so with reluctance, he was forced now and then to approach the book publishers on the subject of advertising. He gave earnest and honest thought to his literary department, and was once praised by Mr. Howells in *Harper's Magazine* for the honourable quality of his criticisms.

But Mr. Stockton, like most men, had only a certain fund of energy and enthusiasm at his dis-

posal. His work on the paper used up the first fruits of his zeal and strength. After that came his article on current poetry, written (unsigned) for a leading imitation literary weekly. The preparation of this involved a careful perusal of at least fifty journals, both American and foreign, and I blush to say it brought him only fifteen dollars a week. He wrote a weekly "New York Letter" for a Chicago paper of bookish tendencies, in which he told with a flavour of intimacy the goings on of literary men in Manhattan whom he never had time or opportunity to meet. This article was paid for at space rates, which are less in Chicago than in New York. On this count he averaged about six dollars a week.

That brings us up to seventy-one dollars, and also pretty close to the limit of our friend's endurance. The additional ten dollars or so needed for the stability of the Stockton exchequer he earned in various ways. Neighbours in New Utrecht would hear his weary typewriter clacking far into the night. He wrote short stories of only fair merit; and he wrote "Sunday stories," which is the lowest depth to which a self-respecting lover of literature can fall. Once in a while he gave a lecture on poetry, but he was a shy man, and he never was asked to lecture twice in the same place. By almost incredible exertions of courage and obstinacy he wrote a novel, which was published,

and sold 2,580 copies the first year. His royalties on this amounted to $348.30—not one third as much, he reflected sadly, as Irvin Cobb would receive for a single short story. He even did a little private tutoring at his home, giving the sons of some of his friends lessons in English literature.

It is to be seen that Mr. Stockton's relatives, back in Indiana, were wrong when they wrote to him admiringly—as they did twice a year—asking for loans, and praising the bold and debonair life of a man of letters in the great city. They did not know that for ten years Mr. Stockton had refused the offers of his friends to put him up for membership at the literary club to which his fancy turned so fondly and so often. He could not afford it. When friends from out of town called on him, he took them to Peck's for a French table d'hôte, with an apologetic murmur.

But it is not to be thought that Mr. Stockton was unhappy or discontented. Those who have experienced the excitements of the existence where one lives from hand to mouth and back to hand again, with rarely more than fifty cents of loose change in pocket, know that there is even a kind of pleasurable exhilaration in it. The characters in George Gissing's Grub Street stories would have thought Stockton rich indeed with his fifty-dollar salary. But he was one of those estimable men who have sense enough to give all their

money to their wives and keep none in their trousers. And though his life was arduous and perhaps dull to outward view, he was a passionate lover of books, and in his little box at the back of the newspaper office, smoking a corncob and thumping out his reviews, he was one of the happiest men in New York. His thirst for books was a positive bulimia; how joyful he was when he found time to do a little work on his growing sheaf of literary essays, which he intended to call "Casual Ablutions," after the famous sign in the British Museum washroom.

It was Mr. Stockton's custom to take a trolley as far as the Brooklyn Bridge, and thence it was a pleasant walk to the office on Park Row. Generally he left home about ten o'clock, thus avoiding the rush of traffic in the earlier hours; and loitering a little along the way, as becomes a man of ideas, his article on poetry would jell in his mind, and he would be at his desk a little after eleven. There he would work until one o'clock with the happy concentration of those who enjoy their tasks. At that time he would go out for a bite of lunch, and would then be at his desk steadily from two until six. Dinner at home was at seven, and after that he worked persistently in his little den under the roof until past midnight.

One morning in spring he left New Utrecht in a mood of perplexity, for to-day his even routine

was in danger of interruption. Halfway across the bridge Stockton paused in some confusion of spirit to look down on the shining river and consider his course.

A year or so before this time, in gathering copy for his poetry articles, he had first come across the name of Finsbury Verne in an English journal at the head of some exquisite verses. From time to time he found more of this writer's lyrics in the English magazines, and at length he had ventured a graceful article of appreciation. It happened that he was the first in this country to recognize Verne's talent, and to his great delight he had one day received a very charming letter from the poet himself, thanking him for his understanding criticism.

Stockton, though a shy and reticent man, had the friendliest nature in the world, and some underlying spirit of kinship in Verne's letter prompted him to warm response. Thus began a correspondence which was a remarkable pleasure to the lonely reviewer, who knew no literary men, although his life was passed among books. Hardly dreaming that they would ever meet, he had insisted on a promise that if Verne should ever visit the States he would make New Utrecht his headquarters. And now, on this very morning, there had come a wireless message via Seagate, saying that Verne was on a ship which would dock that afternoon.

The dilemma may seem a trifling one, but to Stockton's sensitive nature it was gross indeed. He and his wife knew that they could offer but little to make the poet's visit charming. New Utrecht, on the way to Coney Island, is not a likely perching ground for poets; the house was small, shabby, and the spare room had long been made into a workshop for the two boys, where they built steam engines and pasted rotogravure pictures from the Sunday editions on the walls. The servant was an enormous coloured mammy, with a heart of ruddy gold, but in appearance she was pure Dahomey. The bathroom plumbing was out of order, the drawing-room rug was fifteen years old, even the little lawn in front of the house needed trimming, and the gardener would not be round for several days. And Verne had given them only a few hours' notice. How like a poet!

In his letters Stockton had innocently boasted of the pleasant time they would have when the writer should come to visit. He had spoken of evenings beside the fire when they would talk for hours of the things that interest literary men. What would Verne think when he found the hearth only a gas log, and one that had a peculiarly offensive odour? This sickly sweetish smell had become in years of intimacy very dear to Stockton, but he could hardly expect a poet who lived in Well Walk, Hampstead (O Shades of Keats!),

and wrote letters from a London literary club, to understand that sort of thing. Why, the man was a grandson of Jules Verne, and probably had been accustomed to refined surroundings all his life. And now he was doomed to plumb the subfusc depths of New Utrecht!

Stockton could not even put him up at a club, as he belonged to none but the golf club, which had no quarters for the entertainment of out-of-town guests. Every detail of his home life was of the shabby, makeshift sort which is so dear to one's self but needs so much explaining to outsiders. He even thought with a pang of Lorna Doone, the fat, plebeian little mongrel terrier which had meals with the family and slept with the children at night. Verne was probably used to staghounds or Zeppelin hounds or something of the sort, he thought humorously. English poets wear an iris halo in the eyes of humble American reviewers. Those godlike creatures have walked on Fleet Street, have bought books on Paternoster Row, have drunk half-and-half and eaten pigeon pie at the Salutation and Cat, and have probably roared with laughter over some alehouse jest of Mr. Chesterton.

Stockton remembered the photograph Verne had sent him, showing a lean, bearded face with wistful dark eyes against a background of old folios. What would that Olympian creature think

of the drudge of New Utrecht, a mere reviewer who sold his editorial copies to pay for shag tobacco.

Well, thought Stockton, as he crossed the bridge, rejoicing not at all in the splendid towers of Manhattan, candescent in the April sun, they had done all they could. He had left his wife telephoning frantically to grocers, cleaning women, and florists. He himself had stopped at the poultry market on his way to the trolley to order two plump fowls for dinner, and had pinched them with his nervous, ink-stained fingers, as ordered by Mrs. Stockton, to test their tenderness. They would send the three younger children to their grandmother, to be interned there until the storm had blown over; and Mrs. Stockton was going to do what she could to take down the rotogravure pictures from the walls of what the boys fondly called the Stockton Art Gallery. He knew that Verne had children of his own: perhaps he would be amused rather than dismayed by the incongruities of their dismantled guestroom. Presumably the poet was over here for a lecture tour—he would be entertained and fêted everywhere by the cultured rich, for the appreciation which Stockton had started by his modest little essay had grown to the dimension of a fad.

He looked again at the telegram which had shattered the simple routine of his unassuming life.

"On board *Celtic* dock this afternoon three o'clock hope see you. Verne." He sneezed sharply, as was his unconscious habit when nervous. In desperation he stopped at a veterinary's office on Frankfort Street, and left orders to have the doctor's assistant call for Lorna Doone and take her away, to be kept until sent for. Then he called at a wine merchant's and bought three bottles of claret of a moderate vintage. Verne had said something about claret in one of his playful letters. Unfortunately, the man's grandfather was a Frenchman, and undoubtedly he knew all about wines.

Stockton sneezed so loudly and so often at his desk that morning that all his associates knew something was amiss. The Sunday editor, who had planned to borrow fifty cents from him at lunch time, refrained from doing so, in a spirit of pure Christian brotherhood. Even Bob Bolles, the hundred-and-fifty-dollar-a-week conductor of "The Electric Chair," the paper's humorous column, came in to see what was up. Bob's "contribs" had been generous that morning, and he was in unusually good humour for a humorist.

"What's the matter, Stock," he inquired genially, "Got a cold? Or has George Moore sent in a new novel?"

Stockton looked up sadly from the proofs he was correcting. How could he confess his paltry problem to this debonair creature who wore life

lightly, like a flower, and played at literature as he played tennis, with swerve and speed? Bolles was a bachelor, the author of a successful comedy, and a member of the smart literary club which was over the reviewer's horizon, although in the great ocean of letters the humorist was no more than a surf bather. Stockton shook his head. No one but a married man and an unsuccessful author could understand his trouble.

"A touch of asthma," he fibbed shyly. "I always have it at this time of year."

"Come and have some lunch," said the other. "We'll go up to the club and have some ale. That'll put you on your feet."

"Thanks, ever so much," said Stockton, "but I can't do it to-day. Got to make up my page. I tell you what, though——"

He hesitated, and flushed a little.

"Say it," said Bolles kindly.

"Verne is in town to-day; the English poet, you know. Grandson of old Jules Verne. I'm going to put him up at my house. I wish you'd take him around to the club for lunch some day while he's here. He ought to meet some of the men there. I've been corresponding with him for a long time, and I—I'm afraid I rather promised to take him round there, as though I were a member, you know."

"Great snakes!" cried Bolles. "Verne? the

author of 'Candle Light'? And you're going to put him up? You lucky devil. Why, the man's bigger than Masefield. Take him to lunch—I should say I will! Why, I'll put him in the colyum. Both of you come round there to-morrow and we'll have an orgy. I'll order larks' tongues and convolvulus salad. I didn't know you knew him."

"I don't—yet," said Stockton. "I'm going down to meet his steamer this afternoon."

"Well, that's great news," said the volatile humorist. And he ran downstairs to buy the book of which he had so often heard but had never read.

The sight of Bolles' well-cut suit of tweeds had reminded Stockton that he was still wearing the threadbare serge that had done duty for three winters, and would hardly suffice for the honours to come. Hastily he blue-pencilled his proofs, threw them into the wire basket, and hurried outdoors to seek the nearest tailor. He stopped at the bank first, to draw out fifty dollars for emergencies. Then he entered the first clothier's shop he encountered on Nassau Street.

Mr. Stockton was a nervous man, especially so in the crises when he was compelled to buy anything so important as a suit, for usually Mrs. Stockton supervised the selection. To-day his unlucky star was in the zenith. His watch pointed to close on two o'clock, and he was afraid he might be late for the steamer, which docked far

uptown. In his haste, and governed perhaps by some subconscious recollection of the humorist's attractive shaggy tweeds, he allowed himself to be fitted with an ochre-coloured suit of some fleecy checked material grotesquely improper for his unassuming figure. It was the kind of cloth and cut that one sees only in the windows of Nassau Street. Happily he was unaware of the enormity of his offence against society, and rapidly transferring his belongings to the new pockets, he paid down the purchase price and fled to the subway.

When he reached the pier at the foot of Fourteenth Street he saw that the steamer was still in midstream and it would be several minutes before she warped in to the dock. He had no pass from the steamship office, but on showing his newspaperman's card the official admitted him to the pier, and he took his stand at the first cabin gangway, trembling a little with nervousness, but with a pleasant feeling of excitement no less. He gazed at the others waiting for arriving travellers and wondered whether any of the peers of American letters had come to meet the poet. A stoutish, neatly dressed gentleman with a gray moustache looked like Mr. Howells, and he thrilled again. It was hardly possible that he, the obscure reviewer, was the only one who had been notified of Verne's arrival. That tall, hawk-faced man

whose limousine was purring outside must be a certain publisher he knew by sight.

What would these gentlemen say when they learned that the poet was to stay with Kenneth Stockton, in New Utrecht? He rolled up the mustard-coloured trousers one more round—they were much too long for him—and watched the great hull slide along the side of the pier with a peculiar tingling shudder that he had not felt since the day of his wedding.

He expected no difficulty in recognizing Finsbury Verne, for he was very familiar with his photograph. As the passengers poured down the slanting gangway, all bearing the unmistakable air and stamp of superiority that marks those who have just left the sacred soil of England, he scanned the faces with an eye of keen regard. To his surprise he saw the gentlemen he had marked respectively as Mr. Howells and the publisher greet people who had not the slightest resemblance to the poet, and go with them to the customs alcoves. Traveller after traveller hurried past him, followed by stewards carrying luggage; gradually the flow of people thinned, and then stopped altogether, save for one or two invalids who were being helped down the incline by nurses. And still no sign of Finsbury Verne.

Suddenly a thought struck him. Was it possible that—the second class? His eye brightened and

he hurried to the gangway, fifty yards farther down the pier, where the second-cabin passengers were disembarking.

There were more of the latter, and the passageway was still thronged. Just as Stockton reached the foot of the plank a little man in green ulster and deerstalker cap, followed by a plump little woman and four children in single file, each holding fast to the one in front like Alpine climbers, came down the narrow bridge, taking almost ludicrous care not to slip on the cleated boards. To his amazement the reviewer recognized the dark beard and soulful eyes of the poet.

Mr. Verne clutched in rigid arms, not a roll of manuscripts, but a wriggling French poodle, whose tufted tail waved under the poet's chin. The lady behind him, evidently his wife, as she clung steadfastly to the skirt of his ulster, held tightly in the other hand a large glass jar in which two agitated goldfish were swimming, while the four children watched their parents with anxious eyes for the safety of their pets. "Daddy, look out for Ink!" shrilled one of them, as the struggles of the poodle very nearly sent him into the water under the ship's side. Two smiling stewards with mountainous portmanteaux followed the party. "Mother, are Castor and Pollux all right?" cried the smallest child, and promptly fell on his nose on the gangway, disrupting the file.

Stockton, with characteristic delicacy, refrained from making himself known until the Vernes had recovered from the embarrassments of leaving the ship. He followed them at a distance to the "V" section where they waited for the customs examination. With mingled feelings he saw that Finsbury Verne was no cloud-walking deity, but one even as himself, indifferently clad, shy and perplexed of eye, worried with the comic cares of a family man. All his heart warmed toward the poet, who stood in his bulging greatcoat, perspiring and aghast at the uproar around him. He shrank from imagining what might happen when he appeared at home with the whole family, but without hesitation he approached and introduced himself.

Verne's eyes shone with unaffected pleasure at the meeting, and he presented the reviewer to his wife and the children, two boys and two girls. The two boys, aged about ten and eight, immediately uttered cryptic remarks which Stockton judged were addressed to him.

"Castorian!" cried the larger boy, looking at the yellow suit.

"Polluxite!" piped the other in the same breath.

Mrs. Verne, in some embarrassment, explained that the boys were in the throes of a new game they had invented on the voyage. They had created two imaginary countries, named in honour of the goldfish, and it was now their whim to claim

for their respective countries any person or thing that struck their fancy. "Castoria was first," said Mrs. Verne, "so you must consider yourself a citizen of that nation."

Somewhat shamefaced at this sudden honour, Mr. Stockton turned to the poet. "You're all coming home with me, aren't you?" he said. "I got your telegram this morning. We'd be delighted to have you."

"It's awfully good of you," said the poet, "but as a matter of fact we're going straight on to the country to-morrow morning. My wife has some relatives in Yonkers, wherever they are, and she and the children are going to stay with them. I've got to go up to Harvard to give some lectures."

A rush of cool, sweet relief bathed Stockton's brow.

"Why, I'm disappointed you're going right on," he stammered. "Mrs. Stockton and I were hoping——"

"My dear fellow, we could never impose such a party on your hospitality," said Verne. "Perhaps you can recommend us to some quiet hotel where we can stay the night."

Like all New Yorkers, Stockton could hardly think of the name of any hotel when asked suddenly. At first he said the Astor House, and then remembered that it had been demolished years before. At last he recollected that a brother of

his from Indiana had once stayed at the Obelisk.

After the customs formalities were over—not without embarrassment, as Mr. Verne's valise when opened displayed several pairs of bright red union suits and a half-empty bottle of brandy—Stockton convoyed them to a taxi. Noticing the frayed sleeve of the poet's ulster he felt quite ashamed of the aggressive newness of his clothes. And when the visitors whirled away, after renewed promises for a meeting a little later in the spring, he stood for a moment in a kind of daze. Then he hurried toward the nearest telephone booth.

As the Vernes sat at dinner that night in the Abyssinian Room of the Obelisk Hotel, the poet said to his wife: "It would have been delightful to spend a few days with the Stocktons."

"My dear," said she, "I wouldn't have these wealthy Americans see how shabby we are for anything. The children are positively in rags, and your clothes—well, I don't know what they'll think at Harvard. You know if this lecture trip doesn't turn out well we shall be simply bankrupt."

The poet sighed. "I believe Stockton has quite a charming place in the country near New York," he said.

"That may be so," said Mrs. Verne. "But did you ever see such clothes? He looked like a canary."

DON MARQUIS

THERE is nothing more pathetic than the case of the author who is the victim of a supposedly critical essay. You hold him in the hollow of your hand. You may praise him for his humour when he wants to be considered a serious and saturnine dog. You may extol his songs of war and passion when he yearns to be esteemed a light, jovial merryandrew with never a care in the world save the cellar plumbing. You may utterly misrepresent him, and hang some albatross round his neck that will be offensive to him forever. You may say that he hails from Brooklyn Heights when the fact is that he left there two years ago and now lives in Port Washington. You may even (for instance) call him stout. . . .

Don Marquis was born in 1878; reckoning by tens, '88, '98, '08—well, call it forty. He is burly, ruddy, gray-haired, and fond of corn-cob pipes, dark beer, and sausages. He looks a careful blend of Falstaff and Napoleon III. He has conducted the Sun Dial in the New York *Evening Sun* since

tively observed, "is like dropping a rose-petal down the Grand Canyon and waiting to hear the echo." Yet if the petal be authentic rose, the answer will surely come. Some poets seek to raft oblivion by putting on frock coats and reading their works aloud to the women's clubs. Don Marquis has no taste for that sort of mummery. But little by little his potent, yeasty verses, fashioned from the roaring loom of every day, are winning their way into circulation. Any reader who went to *Dreams and Dust* (poems, published October, 1915) expecting to find light and waggish laughter, was on a blind quest. In that book speaks the hungry and visionary soul of this man, quick to see beauty and grace in common things, quick to question the answerless face of life—

> Still mounts the dream on shining pinion,
> Still broods the dull distrust;
> Which shall have ultimate dominion,
> Dream, or dust?

Heavy men are light on their feet: it takes stout poets to write nimble verses (Mr. Chesterton, for instance). Don Marquis has something of Dobsonian cunning to set his musings to delicate, austere music. He can turn a rondeau or a triolet as gracefully as a paying teller can roll Durham cigarettes.

How neat this is:

TO A DANCING DOLL

Formal, quaint, precise, and trim,
  You begin your steps demurely—
There's a spirit almost prim
  In the feet that move so surely,
So discreetly, to the chime
Of the music that so sweetly
  Marks the time.

But the chords begin to tinkle
    Quicker,
And your feet they flash and flicker—
    Twinkle!—
Flash and flutter to a tricksy
    Fickle meter;
And you foot it like a pixie—
    Only fleeter!

Not our current, dowdy
    Things—
"Turkey trots" and rowdy
    Flings—
For they made you overseas
In politer times than these
In an age when grace could please,
    Ere St. Vitus
Clutched and shook us, spine and knees;
Loosed a plague of jerks to smite us!

But Marquis is more than the arbiter of dainty elegance in rhyme: he sings and celebrates a robust world where men struggle upward from

tively observed, "is like dropping a rose-petal down the Grand Canyon and waiting to hear the echo." Yet if the petal be authentic rose, the answer will surely come. Some poets seek to raft oblivion by putting on frock coats and reading their works aloud to the women's clubs. Don Marquis has no taste for that sort of mummery. But little by little his potent, yeasty verses, fashioned from the roaring loom of every day, are winning their way into circulation. Any reader who went to *Dreams and Dust* (poems, published October, 1915) expecting to find light and waggish laughter, was on a blind quest. In that book speaks the hungry and visionary soul of this man, quick to see beauty and grace in common things, quick to question the answerless face of life—

> Still mounts the dream on shining pinion,
> Still broods the dull distrust;
> Which shall have ultimate dominion,
> Dream, or dust?

Heavy men are light on their feet: it takes stout poets to write nimble verses (Mr. Chesterton, for instance). Don Marquis has something of Dobsonian cunning to set his musings to delicate, austere music. He can turn a rondeau or a triolet as gracefully as a paying teller can roll Durham cigarettes.

How neat this is:

TO A DANCING DOLL

Formal, quaint, precise, and trim,
  You begin your steps demurely—
There's a spirit almost prim
  In the feet that move so surely,
So discreetly, to the chime
Of the music that so sweetly
  Marks the time.

But the chords begin to tinkle
    Quicker,
And your feet they flash and flicker—
    Twinkle!—
Flash and flutter to a tricksy
    Fickle meter;
And you foot it like a pixie—
    Only fleeter!

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But Marquis is more than the arbiter of dainty elegance in rhyme: he sings and celebrates a robust world where men struggle upward from

the slime and discontent leaps from star to star. The evolutionary theme is a favourite with him: the grand pageant of humanity groping from Piltdown to Beacon Hill, winning in a million years two precarious inches of forehead. Much more often than F. P. A., his brother colyumist in Manhattan, he dares to disclose the real earnestness that underlies his chaff.

I suppose that the conductor of a daily humorous column stands in the hierarchy of unthanked labourers somewhere between a plumber and a submarine trawler. Most of the available wheezes were pulled long ago by Plato in the *Republic* (not the *New Republic*) or by Samuel Butler in his Notebooks. Contribs come valiantly to hand with a barrowful of letters every day—("The ravings fed him" as Don captioned some contrib's quip about Simeon Stylites living on a column); but nevertheless the direct and alternating current must be turned on six times a week. His jocular exposal of the colyumist's trade secret compares it to the boarding-house keeper's rotation of crops:

MONDAY. Take up an idea in a serious way. (ROAST BEEF.)

TUESDAY. Some one writes us a letter about Monday's serious idea. (COLD ROAST BEEF.)

WEDNESDAY. Josh the idea we took up seriously on Monday. (BEEF STEW.)

THURSDAY. Some one takes issue with us for Wednesday's josh of Monday's serious idea. (BEEFSTEAK PIE.)

FRIDAY. We become a little pensive about our Wednesday's josh of Monday's serious idea—there creeps into our copy a more subdued, sensible note, as if we were acknowledging that after all, the main business of life is not mere hare-brained word-play. (HASH OR CROQUETTES WITH GREEN PEPPERS.)

SATURDAY. Spoof the whole thing again, especially spoofing ourself for having ever taken it seriously. (BEEF SOUP WITH BARLEY IN IT.)

SUNDAY. There isn't any evening paper on Sunday. That is where we have the advantage of the boarding-house keepers.

But the beauty of Don's cuisine is that the beef soup with barley always tastes as good as, or even better than, the original roast. His dry battery has generated in the past few years a dozen features with real voltage—the Savage Portraits, Hermione, Archy the Vers Libre Cockroach, the Aptronymic Scouts, French Without a Struggle, Suggestions to Popular Song Writers, Our Own Wall Mottoes, and the sequence of Prefaces (to an Almanac, a Mileage Book, The Plays of Euripides, a Diary, a Book of Fishhooks, etc.). Some of Marquis's most admirable and delicious fooling has been poured into these Prefaces: I hope that he will put them between book-covers.

One day I got a letter from a big engineering firm in Ohio, enclosing a number of pay-envelopes (empty). They wanted me to examine the aphorisms and orisonswettmardenisms they had been printing on their weekly envelopes, for the inspiration and peptonizing of their employees. They had been using quotations from Emerson, McAdoo, and other panhellenists, and had run out of "sentiments." They wanted suggestions as to where they could find more.

I advised them to get in touch with Don Marquis. I don't know whether they did so or not; but Don's epigrams and bon mots would adorn any pay-envelope anthology. Some of his casual comments on whiskey would do more to discourage the decanterbury pilgrims than a bushel of tracts.

By the time a bartender knows what drink a man will have before he orders, there is little else about him worth knowing.

If you go to sleep while you are loafing, how are you going to know you are loafing?

Because majorities are often wrong it does not follow that minorities are always right.

Young man, if she asks you if you like her hair that way, beware. The woman has already committed matrimony in her own heart.

I am tired of being a promising young man. I've been a promising young man for twenty years.

In most of Don Marquis's japes, a still small voice speaks in the mirthquake:

If you try too hard to get a thing, you don't get it.

If you sweat and strain and worry the other ace will not come—the little ball will not settle upon the right number or the proper colour—the girl will marry the other man—the public will cry, Bedamned to him! he can't write anyhow!—the cosmos will refuse its revelations of divinity—the Welsh rabbit will be stringy—you will find there are not enough rhymes in the language to finish your ballade—the primrose by the river's brim will be only a hayfever carrier—and your fountain pen will dribble ink upon your best trousers.

But Don Marquis's mind has two yolks (to use one of his favourite denunciations). In addition to these comic or satiric shadows, the gnomon of his Sun Dial may be relied on every now and then to register a clear-cut notation of the national mind and heart. For instance this, just after the United States severed diplomatic relations with Germany:

This Beast we know, whom time brings to his last rebirth
Bull-thewed, iron-boned, cold-eyed and strong as Earth. . . .
As Earth, who spawned and lessoned him,
Yielded her earthy secrets, gave him girth,
Armoured the skull and braved the heavy limb—
Who frowned above him, proud and grim,

While he sucked from her salty dugs the lore
Of fire and steel and stone and war:
She taught brute facts, brute might, but not the worth
Of spirit, honour and clean mirth . . . .
His shape is Man, his mood is Dinosaur.

Up from the wild red Welter of the past
Foaming he comes: let this rush be his last.

Too patient we have been, thou knowest, God, thou knowest.
We have been slow as doom. Our dead
Of yesteryear lie on the ocean's bed—
We have denied each pleading ghost—
We have been slow: God, make us sure.
We have been slow. Grant we endure
Unto the uttermost, the uttermost.

Did our slow mood, O God, with thine accord?
Then weld our diverse millions, Lord,
Into one single swinging sword.

I have been combing over the files of the Sun Dial, and it is disheartening to see these deposits of pearl and pie-crust, this sediment of fine mind, buried full fathom five in the yellowing archives of a newspaper. I thought of De Quincey's famous utterance about the press:

Worlds of fine thinking lie buried in that vast abyss, never to be disentombed or restored to human admiration. Like the sea, it has swallowed treasures without end, that no diving-bell will bring up again.

Greatly as we cherish the Sun Dial, we are jealous of it for sapping all its author's time and calories. No writer in America has greater or more meaty, stalwart gifts. Don, we cry, spend less time stoking that furnace out in Port Washington, and more on your novels!

There is no more convincing proof of the success of the Sun Dial than the roster of its contributors. Some of the most beautiful lyrics of the past few years have been printed there (I think particularly of two or three by Padraic Colum). In this ephemeral column of a daily newspaper some of the rarest singers and keenest wits of the time have been glad to exhibit their wares, without pay of course. It would be impossible to give a complete list, but among them are William Rose Benét, Clinton Scollard, Edith M. Thomas, Benjamin De Casseres, Gelett Burgess, Georgia Pangborn, Charles Hanson Towne, Clement Wood.

But the tragedy of the colyumist's task is that the better he does it the harder it becomes. People simply will not leave him alone. All day long they drop into his office, or call him up on the phone in the hope of getting into the column. Poor Don! he has become an institution down on Nassau Street: whatever hour of the day you call, you will find his queue there chivvying him. He is too gracious to throw them out: his only expedient is to take them over to the gin cathedral across the

street and buy them a drink. Lately the poor wretch has had to write his Dial out in the pampas of Long Island, bringing it in with him in the afternoon, in order to get it done undisturbed. How many times I have sworn never to bother him again! And yet, when one is passing in that neighbourhood, the temptation is irresistible. . . . I dare say Ben Jonson had the same trouble. Of course someone ought to endow Don and set him permanently at the head of a chophouse table, presiding over a kind of Mermaid coterie of robust wits. He is a master of the tavernacular.

He is a versatile cove. Philosopher, satirist, burlesquer, poet, critic, and novelist. Perhaps the three critics in this country whose praise is best worth having, and least easy to win, would be Marquis, Strunsky, and O. W. Firkins. And I think that the three leading poets male in this country to-day are Marquis, William Rose Benét, and (perhaps) Vachel Lindsay. Of course Don Marquis has an immense advantage over Will Benét in his stoutness. Will had to feed up on honey and candied apricocks and mares' milk for months before they would admit him to the army.

Hermione and her little group of "Serious Thinkers" have attained the dignity of book publication, and now stand on the shelf beside *Danny's Own Story* and *The Cruise of the Jasper B.* This satire on the azure-pedalled

coteries of Washington Square has perhaps received more publicity than any other of Marquis's writings, but of all Don's drolleries I reserve my chief affection for Archy. The cockroach, endowed by some freak of transmigration with the shining soul of a vers libre poet, is a thoroughly Marquisian whimsy. I make no apology for quoting this prince of blattidae at some length. Many a commuter, opening his evening paper on the train, looks first of all to see if Archy is in the Dial. I love Archy because there seems to me something thoroughly racial and native and American about him. Can you imagine him, for instance, in *Punch?* His author has never told us which one of the vers libre poets it is whose soul has emigrated into Archy, but I feel sure it is not Ezra Pound or any of the expatriated eccentrics who lisp in odd numbers in the King's Road, Chelsea. Could it be Amy Lowell? Perhaps it should be explained that Archy's carelessness as to punctuation and capitals is not mere ostentation, but arises from the fact that he is not strong enough to work the shift key of his typewriter. Ingenious readers of the Sun Dial have suggested many devices to make this possible, but none that seem feasible to the roach himself.

The Argument: Archy, the vers libre cockroach, overhears a person with whiskers and dressed in the uniform of a butler in the British Navy, ask a

German waiter if the pork pie is built. Ja, Ja, replies the waiter. Archy's suspicions are awakened, and he climbs into the pork pie through an air hole, and prepares his soul for parlous times. The naval butler takes the pie on board a launch, and Archy, watching through one of the portholes of the pastry, sees that they are picked up by a British cruiser "an inch or two outside the three-mile line." (This was in neutral days, remember.) Archy continues the narrative, in lower case agate:

it is cuthbert with the pork pie the
captain has been longing for said a
voice and on every side
rang shouts of the pie the pie the
captains pie has come at last and a
salute of nineteen
guns was fired the pie was carried
at once to the
captains mess room where the cap-
tain a grizzled veteran sat with
knife and fork in hand and serviette
tucked
under his chin i knew cried the cap-
tain that if there was a
pork pie in america my faithful
cuthbert would
find it for me the butler bowed and
all the
ships officers pulled up their chairs
to the
table with a rasping sound you may
serve it honest
cuthbert said the captain impatiently
and the butler broke a
hole in the top crust he touched a
hidden mechanism for
immediately something right under
me began to
go tick tock tick tock tick tock what
is that noise captain said the lar-
board mate only the patent log
clicking off the knots said the butler
it needs oiling again but

cuthbert said the captain why are you so
nervous and what means that flush upon your face
that flush your honour is chicken pox said cuthbert i am
subject to sudden attacks of it
unhand that pie cried the ships surgeon leaping to his feet
arrest that butler he is a teuton spy
that is not chicken pox at all it is german measles
ha ha cried the false butler the ship is doomed there is a clock work bomb in this pie my name
is not cuthbert it is friedrich and he leaped
through a port into the sea his blonde side whiskers
which were false falling off as he did so ha ha rang his
mocking laughter from the ocean as he pulled shoreward with
long strokes your ship is doomed my god said the
senior boatswain what shall we do stop the
clock ordered the captain but i had already done so i
braced my head against the hour hand and my feet
against the minute hand and stopped the mechanism the captain
drew his sword and pried off all the top crust gentlemen
he said yonder cockroach has saved the ship
let us throw the pie overboard and steam rapidly away from
it advised the starboard ensign
not so not so cried the captain yon gallant cockroach
must not perish so gratitude is a tradition of the
british navy i would sooner perish with him than
desert him all the time the strain was getting
worse on me if my feet slipped the clock would start again
and all would be lost beads of sweat rolled down my forehead and almost blinded me something

BRIAR CLIFF COLLEGE
SIOUX CITY, IOWA

must be done quick said the first assistant captain the
insect is losing his rigidity wait said the surgeon
and gave me a hypodermic of some powerful east
indian drug which stiffened me like a cataleptic but i
could still see and hear for days and days a council
of war was held about me every afternoon and wireless
reports sent to london save the cockroach even if
you lose the ship wirelessed the admiralty england must
stand by the smaller nations and every hour the
surgeon gave me another hypodermic at the end
of four weeks the cabin boy who had been
thinking deeply all the time suggested that a plug of
wood be inserted in my place which was done
and i fell to the deck well nigh exhausted the next
day i was set on shore in the captains gig and
here i am.

archy

So far as I know, America has made just two entirely original contributions to the world's types of literary and dramatic art. These are the humorous colyum and the burlesque show. The saline and robust repartee of the burlicue is ancient enough in essence, but it is compounded into a new and uniquely American mode, joyously flavoured with Broadway garlic. The newspaper colyum, too, is a native product. Whether Ben Franklin or Eugene Field invented it, it bears the image and superscription of America.

And using the word ephemeral in its strict sense, Don Marquis is unquestionably the cleverest of our ephemeral philosophers. This nation suffers a good deal from lack of humour in high places: our Great Pachyderms have all Won their Way to the Top by a Resolute Struggle. But Don has just chuckled and gone on refusing to answer letters or fill out Mr. Purinton's blasphemous efficiency charts or join the Poetry Society or attend community masques. And somehow all these things seem to melt away, and you look round the map and see Don Marquis taking up all the scenery. . . He has such an œcumenical kind of humour. It's just as true in Brooklyn as it is in the Bronx.

He is at his best when he takes up some philosophic dilemma, or some quaint abstraction (viz., Certainty, Predestination, Idleness, Uxoricide, Prohibition, Compromise, or Cornutation) and sets the idea spinning. Beginning slowly, carelessly, in a deceptive, offhand manner, he lets the toy revolve as it will. Gradually the rotation accelerates; faster and faster he twirls the thought (sometimes losing a few spectators whose centripetal powers are not staunch enough), until, chuckling, he holds up the flashing, shimmering conceit, whirling at top speed and ejaculating sparks. What is so beautiful as a rapidly revolving idea? Marquis's mind is like a gyroscope: the

faster it spins, the steadier it is. There are laws of dynamics in colyums just as anywhere else.

What is there in the nipping air of Galesburg, Illinois, that turns the young sciolists of Knox College toward the rarefied ethers of literature? Eugene Field, S. S. McClure, John Phillips, Ralph Waldo Trine, George Fitch, John Finley, Edgar Lee Masters, Don Marquis—are there other Knox men in the game, too? Marquis was studying at Galesburg about the time of the Spanish War. He has worked on half a dozen newspapers, and assisted Joel Chandler Harris in editing *Uncle Remus's Magazine*. But let him tell his biography in his own words:

Born July 29, 1878, at Walnut, Bureau Co., Ill., a member of the Republican party.

My father was a physician, and I had all the diseases of the time and place free of charge.

Nothing further happened to me until, in the summer of 1896, I left the Republican party to follow the Peerless Leader to defeat.

In 1900 I returned to the Republican party to accept a position in the Census Bureau, at Washington, D. C. This position I filled for some months in a way highly satisfactory to the Government in power. It is particularly gratifying to me to remember that one evening, after I had worked unusually hard at the Census Office, the late President McKinley himself nodded and smiled to me as I passed through the White House grounds on my way home from toil. He had heard of my work that

day, I had no doubt, and this was his way of showing me how greatly he appreciated it.

Nevertheless, shortly after President McKinley paid this public tribute to the honesty, efficiency and importance of my work in the Census Office, I left the Republican party again and accepted a position as reporter on a Washington paper.

Upon entering the newspaper business all the troubles of my earlier years disappeared as if by magic, and I have lived the contented, peaceful, unworried life of the average newspaper man ever since.

There is little more to tell. In 1916 I again returned to the Republican party. This time it was for the express purpose of voting against Mr. Wilson. Then Mr. Hughes was nominated, and I left the Republican party again.

This is the outline of my life in its relation to the times in which I live. For the benefit of those whose curiosity extends to more particular details, I add a careful pen-picture of myself.

It seems more modest, somehow, to put it in the third person:

Height, 5 feet 10½ inches; hair, dove-coloured; scar on little finger of left hand; has assured carriage, walking boldly into good hotels and mixing with patrons on terms of equality; weight, 200 pounds; face slightly asymmetrical, but not definitely criminal in type; loathes Japanese art, but likes beefsteak and onions; wears No. 8 shoe; fond of Francis Thompson's poems; inside seam of trousers, 32 inches; imitates cats, dogs and barnyard animals for the amusement of young children; eyetooth in right side of upper jaw missing; has always been careful to keep thumb prints from possession of

police; chest measurement, 42 inches, varying with respiration; sometimes wears glasses, but usually operates undisguised; dislikes the works of Rabindranath Tagore; corn on little toe of right foot; superstitious, especially with regard to psychic phenomena; eyes blue; does not use drugs nor read his verses to women's clubs; ruddy complexion; no photograph in possession of police; garrulous and argumentative; prominent cheek bones; avoids Bohemian society, so-called, and has never been in a thieves' kitchen, a broker's office nor a class of short-story writing; wears 17-inch collar; waist measurement none of your business; favourite disease, hypochondria; prefers the society of painters, actors, writers, architects, preachers, sculptors, publishers, editors, musicians, among whom he often succeeds in insinuating himself, avoiding association with crooks and reformers as much as possible; walks with rapid gait; mark of old fracture on right shin; cuffs on trousers, and coat cut loose, with plenty of room under the arm pits; two hip pockets; dislikes Roquefort cheese, "Tom Jones," Wordsworth's poetry, absinthe cocktails, most musical comedy, public banquets, physical exercise, Billy Sunday, steam heat, toy dogs, poets who wear their souls outside, organized charity, magazine covers, and the gas company; prominent callouses on two fingers of right hand prevent him being expert pistol shot; belt straps on trousers; long upper lip; clean shaven; shaggy eyebrows; affects soft hats; smile, one-sided; no gold fillings in teeth; has served six years of indeterminate sentence in Brooklyn, with no attempt to escape, but is reported to have friends outside; voice, husky; scar above the forehead concealed by hair;

commonly wears plain gold ring on little finger of left hand; dislikes prunes, tramp poets and imitations of Kipling; trousers cut loose over hips and seat; would likely come along quietly if arrested.

I would fail utterly in this rambling anatomy if I did not insist that Don Marquis regards his column not merely as a soapslide but rather as a cudgelling ground for sham and hypocrisy. He has something of the quick Stevensonian instinct for the moral issue, and the Devil not infrequently winces about the time the noon edition of the *Evening Sun* comes from the press. There is no man quicker to bonnet a fallacy or drop the acid just where it will disinfect. For instance, this comment on some bolshevictory in Russia:

A kind word was recently seen, on one of the principal streets of Petrograd, attempting to butter a parsnip.

For the plain man who shies at surplice and stole, the Sun Dial is a very real pulpit, whence, amid excellent banter, he hears much that is purging and cathartic in a high degree. The laughter of fat men is a ringing noble music, and Don Marquis, like Friar Tuck, deals texts and fisticuffs impartially. What an archbishop of Canterbury he would have made! He is a burly and bonny dominie, and his congregation rarely miss the point of the sermon. We cannot close better than by quoting part of his Colyumist's Prayer in

which he admits us somewhere near the pulse of his machine:

> I pray Thee, make my colyum read,
> And give me thus my daily bread.
> Endow me, if Thou grant me wit,
> Likewise with sense to mellow it.
> Save me from feeling so much hate
> My food will not assimilate;
> Open mine eyes that I may see
> Thy world with more of charity,
> And lesson me in good intents
> And make me friend of innocence. . . .
> Make me (sometimes at least) discreet;
> Help me to hide my self-conceit,
> And give me courage now and then
> To be as dull as are most men.
> And give me readers quick to see
> When I am satirizing Me. . . .
> Grant that my virtues may atone
> For some small vices of mine own.

And it is thoroughly characteristic of Don Marquis that he follows his prayer with this comment:

> People, when they pray, usually pray not for what they really want—and intend to have if they can get it—but for what they think the Creator wants them to want. We made a certain attempt to be sincere in the above verses; but even at that no doubt a lot of affectation crept in.

THE ART OF WALKING

THERE was fine walking on the hills in the direction of the sea."

This heart-stirring statement, which I find in an account of the life of William and Dorothy Wordsworth when they inhabited a quiet cottage near Crewkerne in Dorset, reminds me how often the word "walking" occurs in any description of Wordsworth's existence. De Quincey assures us that the poet's props were very ill shapen—"they were pointedly condemned by all female connoisseurs in legs"—but none the less he was *princeps arte ambulandi*. Even had he lived today, when all our roads are barbarized by exploding gasoline vapours, I do not think Wordsworth would have flivvered. Of him the Opium Eater made the classic pronouncement: "I calculate that with these identical legs W. must have traversed a distance of 175,000 to 180,000 English miles—a mode of exertion which, to him, stood in the stead of alcohol and all other stimulants whatsoever to the animal spirits; to which, indeed, he was indebted for a life of unclouded happiness,

and we for much of what is most excellent in his writings."

A book that says anything about walking has a ready passage to my inmost heart. The best books are always those that set down with "amorous precision" the satisfying details of human pilgrimage. How one sympathizes with poor Pepys in his outburst (April 30, 1663) about a gentleman who seems to have been "Always Taking the Joy Out of Life."

> Lord! what a stir Stankes makes, with his being crowded in the streets, and wearied in walking in London, and would not be wooed to go to a play, nor to Whitehall, or to see the lions, though he was carried in a coach. I never could have thought there had been upon earth a man so little curious in the world as he is.

Now your true walker is mightily "curious in the world," and he goes upon his way zealous to sate himself with a thousand quaintnesses. When he writes a book he fills it full of food, drink, tobacco, the scent of sawmills on sunny afternoons, and arrivals at inns late at night. He writes what Mr. Mosher calls a book-a-bosom. Diaries and letters are often best of all because they abound in these matters. And because walking can never again be what it was—the motor-cars will see to that—it is our duty to pay it greater reverence and honour.

Wordsworth and Coleridge come first to mind in any talk about walking. The first time they met was in 1797 when Coleridge tramped from Nether Stowey to Racedown (thirty miles in an air-line, and full forty by road) to make the acquaintance of William and Dorothy. That is practically from the Bristol Channel to the English ditto, a rousing stretch. It was Wordsworth's pamphlet describing a walk across France to the Alps that spurred Coleridge on to this expedition. The trio became fast friends, and William and Dorothy moved to Alfoxden (near Nether Stowey) to enjoy the companionship. What one would give for some adequate account of their walks and talks together over the Quantocks. They planned a little walking trip into Devonshire that autumn (1797) and "The Ancient Mariner" was written in the hope of defraying the expenses of the adventure.

De Quincey himself, who tells us so much jovial gossip about Wordsworth and Coleridge, was no mean pedestrian. He describes a forty-mile all-night walk from Bridgewater to Bristol, on the evening after first meeting Coleridge. He could not sleep after the intellectual excitement of the day, and through a summer night "divinely calm" he busied himself with meditation on the sad spectacle he had witnessed: a great mind hastening to decay.

I have always fancied that walking as a fine

art was not much practised before the Eighteenth Century. We know from Ambassador Jusserand's famous book how many wayfarers were on the roads in the Fourteenth Century, but none of these were abroad for the pleasures of moving meditation and scenery. We can gather from Mr. Tristram's *Coaching Days and Coaching Ways* that the highroads were by no means safe for solitary travellers even so late as 1750. In *Joseph Andrews* (1742) whenever any of the characters proceed afoot they are almost certain to be held up. Mr. Isaac Walton, it is true, was a considerable rambler a century earlier than this, and in his Derbyshire hills must have passed many lonely gullies; but footpads were more likely to ambush the main roads. It would be a hard-hearted bandit who would despoil the gentle angler of his basket of trouts. Goldsmith, too, was a lusty walker, and tramped it over the Continent for two years (1754–56) with little more baggage than a flute; he might have written *The Handy Guide for Beggars* long before Vachel Lindsay. But generally speaking, it is true that cross-country walks for the pure delight of rhythmically placing one foot before the other were rare before Wordsworth. I always think of him as one of the first to employ his legs as an instrument of philosophy.

After Wordsworth they come thick and fast. Hazlitt, of course—have you paid the tax that

R. L. S. imposes on all who have not read Hazlitt's "On Going a Journey"? Then Keats: never was there more fruitful walk than the early morning stroll from Clerkenwell to the Poultry in October, 1816, that produced "Much have I travelled in the realms of gold." He must have set out early enough, for the manuscript of the sonnet was on Cowden Clarke's table by breakfast time. And by the way, did you know that the copy of Chapman's Homer which inspired it belonged to the financial editor of the *Times?* Never did financial editor live to better purpose!

There are many words of Keats that are a joyful viaticum for the walker: get these by rote in some membrane of memory:

> The great Elements we know of are no mean comforters: the open sky sits upon our senses like a sapphire crown—the Air is our robe of state—the Earth is our throne, and the sea a mighty minstrel playing before it.

The Victorians were great walkers. Railways were but striplings; inns were at their prime. Hark to the great names in the walker's Hall of Fame: Tennyson, FitzGerald, Matthew Arnold, Carlyle, Kingsley, Meredith, Richard Jefferies. What walker can ever forget the day when he first read *The Story of My Heart?* In my case it was the 24th of August, 1912, on a train from London to Cambridge. Then there were George Borrow, Emily

Brontë on her Yorkshire moors, and Leslie Stephen, one of the princes of the clan and founder of the famous Sunday Tramps of whom Meredith was one. Walt Whitman would have made a notable addition to that posse of philosophic walkers, save that I fear the garrulous half-baked old barbarian would have been disappointed that he could not dominate the conversation.

There have been stout walkers in our own day. Mr. W. H. Davies (the Super-Tramp), G. M. Trevelyan, Hilaire Belloc, Edward Thomas who died on the field of honour in April, 1917, and Francis Ledwidge, who was killed in Flanders. Who can forget his noble words, "I have taken up arms for the fields along the Boyne, for the birds and the blue sky over them." There is Walter Prichard Eaton, the Jefferies of our own Berkshires. One could extend the list almost without end. Sometimes it seems as though literature were a co-product of legs and head.

Charles Lamb and Leigh Hunt were great city ramblers, followed in due course by Dickens, R. L. S., Edward Lucas, Holbrook Jackson, and Pearsall Smith. Mr. Thomas Burke is another, whose *Nights in Town* will delight the lover of the greatest of all cities. But urban wanderings, delicious as they are, are not quite what we mean by walking. On pavements one goes by fit and start, halting to see, to hear, and to speculate. In the

country one captures the true ecstasy of the long, unbroken swing, the harmonious glow of mind and body, eyes fed, soul feasted, brain and muscle exercised alike.

Meredith is perhaps the Supreme Pontiff of modern country walkers: no soft lover of drowsy golden weather, but master of the stiffer breed who salute frost and lashing rain and roaring southwest wind, who leap to grapple with the dissolving riddles of destiny. February and March are his months:

> For love we Earth, then serve we all;
> Her mystic secret then is ours:
> We fall, or view our treasures fall,
> Unclouded, as beholds her flowers
>
> Earth, from a night of frosty wreck,
> Enrobed in morning's mounted fire,
> When lowly, with a broken neck,
> The crocus lays her cheek to mire.

I suppose every walker collects a few precious books which form the bible of his chosen art. I have long been collecting a Walker's Breviary of my own. It includes Stevenson's *Walking Tours*, G. M. Trevelyan's *Walking*, Leslie Stephen's *In Praise of Walking*, shards and crystals from all the others I have mentioned. Michael Fairless, Vachel Lindsay, and Frank Sidgwick have place in

it. On my private shelf stands *Journeys to Bagdad* by Mr. Charles Brooks, who has good pleasantry to utter on this topic; and a manly little volume, *Walking as Education*, by the Rev. A. N. Cooper, "the walking parson," published in England in 1910. On that same shelf there will soon stand a volume of delicious essays by one of the most accomplished of American walkers, Mr. Robert Cortes Holliday, the American Belloc, whose *Walking Stick Papers* has beckoned to the eye of a far-seeing publisher. Mr. Holliday it is who has bravely stated why so few of the fair sex are able to participate in walking tours:

No one, though (this is the first article to be observed), should ever go a journey with any other than him with whom one walks arm in arm, in the evening, the twilight, and, talking (let us suppose) of men's given names, agrees that if either should have a son he shall be named after the other. Walking in the gathering dusk, two and two, since the world began, there have always been young men who have thus to one another plighted their troth. If one is not still one of these, then, in the sense here used, journeys are over for him. What is left to him of life he may enjoy, but not journeys. Mention should be made in passing that some have been found so ignorant of the nature of journeys as to suppose that they might be taken in company with members, or a member, of the other sex. Now, one who writes of journeys would cheerfully be burned at the stake before he would knowingly under-estimate

women. But it must be confessed that it is another season in the life of man that they fill.

They are too personal for the high enjoyment of going a journey. They must forever be thinking about you or about themselves; with them everything in the world is somehow tangled up in these matters; and when you are with them (you cannot help it, or if you could they would not allow it) you must forever be thinking about them or yourself. Nothing on either side can be seen detached. They cannot rise to that philosophic plane of mind which is the very marrow of going a journey. One reason for this is that they can never escape from the idea of society: You are in their society, they are in yours; and the multitudinous personal ties which connect you all to that great order called society that you have for a period got away from physically are present. Like the business man who goes on a vacation from his business and takes his business habits along with him, so on a journey they would bring society along, and all sort of etiquette.

He that goes a journey shakes off the trammels of the world; he has fled all impediments and inconveniences; he belongs, for the moment, to no time or place. He is neither rich nor poor, but in that which he thinks and sees. There is not such another Arcadia for this on earth as in going a journey. He that goes a journey escapes, for a breath of air, from all conventions; without which, though, of course, society would go to pot; and which are the very natural instinct of women.

Mr. Holliday has other goodly matter upon the philosophy and art of locomotion, and those who

are wise and have a lively faith may be admitted to great and surpassing delights if they will here and now make memorandum to buy his book, which will soon be published.

Speaking of Vachel Lindsay, his *Handy Guide for Beggars* will bring an itch along the shanks of those who love shoe-leather and a knobbed stick. Vachel sets out for a walk in no mean and pettifogging spirit: he proceeds as an army with banners: he intends that the world shall know he is afoot: the Great Khan of Springfield is unleashed —let alewives and deacons tremble!

Ungenerous hosts have cozened Vachel by begging him to recite his poems at the beginning of each course, in the meantime getting on with their eating; but despite the naïveté of his eagerness to sing, there is a plain and manly simplicity about Vachel that delights us all. We like to know that here is a poet who has wrestled with poverty, who never wrote a Class Day poem at Harvard, who has worn frayed collars or none at all, and who lets the barber shave the back of his neck. We like to know that he has tramped the ties in Georgia, harvested in Kansas, been fumigated in New Jersey, and lives contented in Illinois. Four weeks a year he lives as the darling of the cisalleghany Browning Societies, but he is always glad to get back to Springfield and resume his robes as the local Rabindranath. If he ever buys an auto-

mobile I am positive it will be a Ford. Here is *homo americanus*, one of ourselves, who never wore spats in his life.

But even the plain man may see visions. Walking on crowded city streets at night, watching the lighted windows, delicatessen shops, peanut carts, bakeries, fish stalls, free lunch counters piled with crackers and saloon cheese, and minor poets struggling home with the Saturday night marketing—he feels the thrill of being one, or at least two-thirds, with this various, grotesque, pathetic, and surprising humanity. The sense of fellowship with every other walking biped, the full-blooded understanding that Whitman and O. Henry knew in brimming measure, comes by gulps and twinges to almost all. That is the essence of Lindsay's feeling about life. He loves crowds, companionship, plenty of sirloin and onions, and seeing his name in print. He sings and celebrates the great symbols of our hodge-podge democracy: ice-cream soda, electrical sky-signs, Sunday-school picnics, the movies, Mark Twain. In the teeming ooze and ocean bottoms of our atlantic humanity he finds rich corals and rainbow shells, hospitality, reverence, love, and beauty.

This is the sentiment that makes a merry pedestrian, and Vachel has scrutineered and scuffled through a dozen states, lightening larders and puzzling the worldly. Afoot and penniless is his

technique—"stopping when he had a mind to, singing when he felt inclined to"—and begging his meals and bed. I suppose he has had as many free meals as any American citizen; and this is how he does it, copied from his little pamphlet used on many a road:

RHYMES TO BE TRADED FOR BREAD

Being new verses by Nicholas Vachel Lindsay, Springfield, Illinois, June, 1912, printed expressly as a substitute for money.

This book is to be used in exchange for the necessities of life on a tramp-journey from the author's home town, through the West and back, during which he will observe the following rules:

(1) Keep away from the cities.
(2) Keep away from the railroads.
(3) Have nothing to do with money. Carry no baggage.
(4) Ask for dinner about quarter after eleven.
(5) Ask for supper, lodging, and breakfast about quarter of five.
(6) Travel alone.
(7) Be neat, truthful, civil, and on the square.
(8) Preach the Gospel of Beauty.

In order to carry out the last rule there will be three exceptions to the rule against baggage. (1) The author will carry a brief printed statement, called "The Gospel of Beauty." (2) He will carry this book of rhymes for

distribution. (3) Also he will carry a small portfolio with pictures, etc., chosen to give an outline of his view of the history of art, especially as it applies to America.

Perhaps I have tarried too long over Vachel; but I have set down his theories of vagabonding because many walkers will find them interesting. *The Handy Guide for Beggars* will leave you footsore but better for the exercise. And when the fascinating story of American literature in this decade (1910–20) is finally written, there will be a happy and well-merited corner in it for a dusty but "neat, truthful, and civil" figure from Springfield, Illinois.

A good pipeful of prose to solace yourself withal, about sunset on a lonely road, is that passage on "Lying Awake at Night" to be found in *The Forest* by Stewart Edward White.

The motors have done this for us at least, that as they have made the highways their own beyond dispute, walking will remain the mystic and private pleasure of the secret and humble few. For us the byways, the footpaths, and the pastures will be sanctified and sweet. Thank heaven there are still gentle souls uncorrupted by the victrola and the limousine. In our old trousers and our easy shoes, with pipe and stick, we can do our fifteen miles between lunch and dinner, and glorify the ways of God to man.

And sometimes, about two o'clock of an afternoon (these spells come most often about half an hour after lunch), the old angel of peregrination lifts himself up in me, and I yearn and wamble for a season afoot. When a blue air is moving keenly through bare boughs this angel is most vociferous. I gape wanly round the lofty citadel where I am pretending to earn the Monday afternoon envelope. The filing case, thermostat, card index, typewriter, automatic telephone: these ingenious anodynes avail me not. Even the visits of golden nymphs, sweet ambassadors of commerce, who rustle in and out of my room with memoranda, mail, manuscripts, aye, even these lightfoot figures fail to charm. And the mind goes out to the endless vistas of streets, roads, fields, and rivers that summon the wanderer with laughing voice. Somewhere a great wind is scouring the hillsides; and once upon a time a man set out along the Great North Road to walk to Royston in the rain. . . .

Grant us, O Zeus! the tingling tremor of thigh and shank that comes of a dozen sturdy miles laid underheel. Grant us "fine walking on the hills in the direction of the sea"; or a winding road that tumbles down to some Cotswold village. Let an inn parlour lie behind red curtains, and a table be drawn toward the fire. Let there be a loin of cold beef, an elbow of yellow cheese, a tankard of dog's nose. Then may we prop our Bacon's Essays

against the pewter and study those mellow words: "Certainly it is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth." *Haec studia pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur.*

RUPERT BROOKE

RUPERT BROOKE had the oldest pith of England in his fibre. He was born of East Anglia, the original vein of English blood. Ruddy skin, golden-brown hair, blue eyes, are the stamp of the Angles. Walsingham, in Norfolk, was the home of the family. His father was a master at Rugby; his grandfather a canon in the church.

In 1913 Heffer, the well-known bookseller and publisher of Cambridge, England, issued a little anthology called *Cambridge Poems 1900–1913*. This volume was my first introduction to Brooke. As an undergraduate at Oxford during the years 1910–13 I had heard of his work from time to time; but I think we youngsters at Oxford were too absorbed in our own small versemakings to watch very carefully what the "Tabs" were doing. His poem "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester," reprinted in Heffer's *Cambridge Poems*, first fell under my eye during the winter of 1913–14.

Grantchester is a tiny hamlet just outside Cambridge; set in the meadows along the Cam or

Granta (the earlier name), and next door to the Trumpington of Chaucer's "The Reeve's Tale." All that Cambridge country is flat and comparatively uninteresting; patchworked with chalky fields bright with poppies; slow, shallow streams drifting between pollard willows; it is the beginning of the fen district, and from the brow of the Royston downs (thirteen miles away) it lies as level as a table-top with the great chapel of King's clear against the sky. It is the favourite lament of Cambridge men that their "*Umgebung*" is so dull and monotonous compared with the rolling witchery of Oxfordshire.

But to the young Cantab sitting over his beer at the Café des Westens in Berlin, the Cambridge villages seemed precious and fair indeed. Balancing between genuine homesickness for the green pools of the Cam, and a humorous whim in his rhymed comment on the outlying villages, Brooke wrote the Grantchester poem; and probably when the fleeting pang of nostalgia was over enjoyed the evening in Berlin hugely. But the verses are more than of merely passing interest. To one who knows that neighbourhood the picture is cannily vivid. To me it brings back with painful intensity the white winding road from Cambridge to Royston which I have bicycled hundreds of times. One sees the little inns along the way—the Waggon and Horses, the Plough, the King's Arms—and the

recurring blue signboard *Fine Royston Ales* (the Royston brewery being famous in those parts). Behind the fun there shines Brooke's passionate devotion to the soil and soul of England which was to reach its final expression so tragically soon. And even behind this the immortal questions of youth which have no country and no clime—

> Say, is there Beauty yet to find?
> And Certainty? and Quiet kind?

No lover of England, certainly no lover of Cambridge, is likely to forget the Grantchester poem. But knowing Brooke only by that, one may perhaps be excused for having merely ticketed him as one of the score of young varsity poets whom Oxford and Cambridge had graduated in the past decade and who are all doing fine and promising work. Even though he tarried here in the United States ("El Cuspidorado," as he wittily observed) and many hold precious the memory of his vivid mind and flashing face, to most of us he was totally unknown. Then came the war; he took part in the unsuccessful Antwerp Expedition; and while in training for the Ægean campaign he wrote the five sonnets entitled "1914." I do not know exactly when they were written or where first published. Their great popularity began when the Dean of St. Paul's quoted from them in a sermon on Easter Day,

1915, alluding to them as the finest expression of the English spirit that the war had called forth. They came to New York in the shape of clippings from the London *Times*. No one could read the matchless sonnet:

> "If I should die, think only this of me:
> That there's some corner of a foreign field
> That is forever England."

and not be thrilled to the quick. A country doctor in Ohio to whom I sent a copy of the sonnet wrote "I cannot read it without tears." This was poetry indeed; like the Scotchman and his house, we kent it by the biggin o't. I suppose many another stranger must have done as I did: wrote to Brooke to express gratitude for the perfect words. But he had sailed for the Mediterranean long before. Presently came a letter from London saying that he had died on the very day of my letter—April 23, 1915. He died on board the French hospital ship *Duguay-Trouin*, on Shakespeare's birthday, in his 28th year. One gathers from the log of the hospital-ship that the cause of his death was a malignant ulcer, due to the sting of some venomous fly. He had been weakened by a previous touch of sunstroke.

A description of the burial is given in *Memorials of Old Rugbeians Who Fell in the Great War*. It vividly recalls Stevenson's last journey to the

Samoan mountain top which Brooke himself had so recently visited. The account was written by one of Brooke's comrades, who has since been killed in action:

We found a most lovely place for his grave, about a mile up the valley from the sea, an olive grove about a watercourse, dry now, but torrential in winter. Two mountains flank it on either side, and Mount Khokilas is at its head. We chose a place in the most lovely grove I have ever seen, or imagined, a little glade of about a dozen trees, carpeted with mauve-flowering sage. Over its head droops an olive tree, and round it is a little space clear of all undergrowth.

About a quarter past nine the funeral party arrived and made their way up the steep, narrow, and rocky path that leads to the grave. The way was so rough and uncertain that we had to have men with lamps every twenty yards to guide the bearers. He was borne by petty officers of his own company, and so slowly did they go that it was not till nearly eleven that they reached the grave.

We buried him by cloudy moonlight. He wore his uniform, and on the coffin were his helmet, belt, and pistol (he had no sword). We lined the grave with flowers and olive, and Colonel Quilter laid an olive wreath on the coffin. The chaplain who saw him in the afternoon read the service very simply. The firing party fired three volleys and the bugles sounded the "Last Post."

And so we laid him to rest in that lovely valley, his head towards those mountains that he would have

loved to know, and his feet towards the sea. He once said in chance talk that he would like to be buried in a Greek island. He could have no lovelier one than Skyros, and no quieter resting place.

On his grave we heaped great blocks of white marble; the men of his company made a great wooden cross for his head, with his name upon it, and his platoon put a smaller one at his feet. On the back of the large cross our interpreter wrote in Greek. . . . "Here lies the servant of God, sub-lieutenant in the English navy, who died for the deliverance of Constantinople from the Turks."

The next morning we sailed, and had no chance of revisiting his grave.

It is no mere flippancy to say that the war did much for Rupert Brooke. The boy who had written many hot, morbid, immature verses and a handful of perfect poetry, stands now by one swift translation in the golden cloudland of English letters. There will never, can never, be any laggard note in the praise of his work. And of a young poet dead one may say things that would be too fulsome for life. Professor Gilbert Murray is quoted:

> Among all who have been poets and died young, it is hard to think of one who, both in life and death, has so typified the ideal radiance of youth and poetry.

In the grave among the olive trees on the island of Skyros, Brooke found at least one Certainty—that of being "among the English poets." He

would probably be the last to ask a more high-sounding epitaph.

His *Collected Poems* as published consist of eighty-two pieces, fifty of which were published in his first book, issued (in England only) in 1911. That is to say fifty of the poems were written before the age of 24, and seventeen of the fifty before 21. These last are thoroughly youthful in formula. We all go through the old familiar cycle, and Brooke did not take his youth at second hand. Socialism, vegetarianism, bathing by moonlight in the Cam, sleeping out of doors, walking barefoot on the crisp English turf, channel crossings and what not—it is all a part of the grand game. We can only ask that the man really see what he says he sees, and report it with what grace he can muster.

And so of the seventeen earliest poems there need not be fulsome praise. Few of us are immortal poets by twenty-one. But even Brooke's undergraduate verses refused to fall entirely into the usual grooves of sophomore song. So unerring a critic as Professor Woodberry (his introduction to the *Collected Poems* is so good that lesser hands may well pause) finds in them "more of the intoxication of the god" than in the later rounder work. They include the dreaming tenderness of "Day That I Have Loved"; they include such neat little pictures of the gross and sordid as the two poems "Wagner" and "Dawn," written on a

trip in Germany. (It is curious that the only note of exasperation in Brooke's poems occurs when he writes from Germany. One finds it again, wittily put, in "Grantchester.")

This vein of brutality and resolute ugliness that one finds here and there in Brooke's work is not wholly amiss nor unintelligible. Like all young men of quick blood he seized gaily upon the earthy basis of our humanity and found in it food for purging laughter. There was never a young poet worth bread and salt who did not scrawl ribald verses in his day; we may surmise that Brooke's peers at King's would recall many vigorous stanzas that are not included in the volume at hand. The few touches that we have in this vein show a masculine fear on Brooke's part of being merely pretty in his verse. In his young thirst for reality he did not boggle at coarse figures or loathsome metaphors. Just as his poems of 1905–08 are of the cliché period where all lips are "scarlet," and lamps are "relumed," so the section dated 1908–11 shows Brooke in the "Shropshire Lad" stage, at the mercy of extravagant sex images, and yet developing into the dramatic felicity of his sonnet "The Hill":

> Breathless, we flung us on the windy hill,
> Laughed in the sun, and kissed the lovely grass,
> You said, "Through glory and ecstasy we pass;
> Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds sing still,

When we are old, are old. . . ." "And when we die
All's over that is ours; and life burns on
Through other lovers, other lips," said I,
—"Heart of my heart, our heaven is now, is won!"

"We are Earth's best, that learnt her lesson here.
Life is our cry. We have kept the faith!" we said:
"We shall go down with unreluctant tread
Rose-crowned into the darkness!" . . . Proud we were
And laughed, that had such brave true things to say.
—And then you suddenly cried, and turned away.

The true lover of poetry, it seems to me, cannot but wish that the *1914* sonnets and the most perfect of the later poems had been separately issued. The best of Brooke forms a thin sheaf of consummate beauty, and I imagine that the little edition of *1914 and Other Poems*, containing the thirty-two later poems, which was published in England and issued in Garden City by Doubleday, Page & Company in July, 1915, to save the American copyright, will always be more precious than the complete edition. As there were only twenty-five copies of this first American edition, it is extremely rare and will undoubtedly be sought after by collectors. But for one who is interested to trace the growth of Brooke's power, the steadying of his poetic orbit and the mounting flame of his joy in life, the poems of 1908–11 are an instructive study. From the perfected brutality of "Jealousy" or "Menelaus and Helen" or "A

Channel Passage" (these bite like Meredith) we see him passing to sonnets that taste of Shakespeare and foretell his utter mastery of the form. What could better the wit and beauty of this song:

"Oh! Love," they said, "is King of Kings,
And Triumph is his crown.
Earth fades in flame before his wings,
And Sun and Moon bow down."
But that, I knew, would never do;
And Heaven is all too high.
So whenever I meet a Queen, I said,
I will not catch her eye.

"Oh! Love," they said, and "Love," they said,
"The Gift of Love is this;
A crown of thorns about thy head,
And vinegar to thy kiss!"—
But Tragedy is not for me;
And I'm content to be gay.
So whenever I spied a Tragic Lady,
I went another way.

And so I never feared to see
You wander down the street,
Or come across the fields to me
On ordinary feet.
For what they'd never told me of,
And what I never knew;
It was that all the time, my love,
Love would be merely you.

We come then to the five sonnets inspired by the war. Let us be sparing of clumsy comment.

They are the living heart of young England; the throbbing soul of all that gracious manhood torn from its happy quest of Beauty and Certainty, flung unheated into the absurdities of war, and yet finding in this supreme sacrifice an answer to all its pangs of doubt. All the hot yearnings of "1905–08" and "1908–11" are gone; here is no Shropshire Lad enlisting for spite, but a joyous surrender to England of all that she had given. See his favourite metaphor (that of the swimmer) recur—what pictures it brings of "Parson's Pleasure" on the Cher and the willowy bathing pool on the Cam. How one recalls those white Greek bodies against the green!

Now, God be thanked who has matched us with His hour,
And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,
With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,
To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping.

To those who tell us England is grown old and fat and soft, there is the answer. It is no hymn of hate that England's youth has sung, but the farewell of those who, loving life with infinite zest, have yet found in surrendering it to her the Beauty, the Certainty, yes and the Quiet, which they had sought. On those five pages are packed in simple words all the love of life, the love of woman, the love of England that make Brooke's

memory sweet. Never did the sonnet speak to finer purpose. "In his hands the thing became a trumpet"—

THE DEAD

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,
That men call age; and those who would have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honour has come back, as a King, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
And Nobleness walks in our ways again;
And we have come into our heritage.

It would be misleading, perhaps, to leave Brooke's poetry with the echo of this solemn note. No understanding of the man would be complete without mentioning the vehement gladness and merriment he found in all the commonplaces of life. Poignant to all cherishers of the precious details of existence must be his poem "The Great Lover" where he catalogues a sort of trade order list of his stock in life. The lines speak with the very accent of Keats. These are some of the things he holds dear—

White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust;
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust
Of friendly bread; and many tasting food;
Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood;
And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers;
And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,
Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon;
Then, the cool kindliness of sheets, that soon
Smoothe away trouble; and the rough male kiss
Of blankets; grainy wood; live hair that is
Shining and free; blue-massing clouds; the keen
Unpassioned beauty of a great machine;
The benison of hot water; furs to touch;
The good smell of old clothes; and other such——
. . . All these have been my loves.

Of his humour only those who knew him personally have a right to speak; but where does one find a more perfect bit of gentle satire than "Heaven" where he gives us a Tennysonian fish pondering the problem of a future life.

This life cannot be All, they swear,
For how unpleasant, if it were!
One may not doubt that, somehow, Good
Shall come of Water and of Mud;
And, sure, the reverent eye must see
A Purpose in Liquidity.
We darkly know, by Faith we cry
The future is not Wholly Dry. . . .
But somewhere, beyond Space and Time,
Is wetter water, slimier slime!

No future anthology of English wit can be complete without that exquisite bit of fooling.

Of such a sort, to use Mr. Mosher's phrase, was Rupert Chawner Brooke, "the latest and greatest of young Englishmen."

17 HERIOT ROW

THERE is a small black notebook into which I look once or twice a year to refresh my memory of a carnal and spiritual pilgrimage to Edinburgh, made with Mifflin McGill (upon whose head be peace) in the summer of 1911. It is a statement of light-hearted youth, savoury with the unindentured joys of twenty-one and the grand literary passion. Would that one might again steer *Shotover* (dearest of pushbikes) along the Banbury Road, and see Mifflin's lean shanks twirl up the dust on the way to Stratford! Never was more innocent merriment spread upon English landscape. When I die, bury the black notebook with me.

That notebook is memorable also in a statistical way, and perchance may serve future historians as a document proving the moderate cost of wayfaring in those halcyon days. Nothing in Mr. Pepys' diary is more interesting than his meticulous record of what his amusements cost him. Mayhap some future economist will pore upon these guileless confessions. For in the black

memorandum book I succeeded, for almost the only time in my life, in keeping an accurate record of the lapse of coin during nine whole days. I shall deposit the document with the Congressional Library in Washington for future annalists; in the meantime I make no excuse for recounting the items of the first sixty hours. Let no one take amiss the frequent entries marked "cider." July, 1911, was a hot month and a dusty, and we were biking fifty miles the day. Please reckon exchange at two cents per penny.

		£	s.	d.
July 16	pint cider			4
	½ pint cider			1½
	lunch at Banbury		2	2
	pint cider at Ettington			3
	supper at Stratford		1	3
	stamp and postcard			2
			4	3½
July 17	Postcards and stamps			9
	pencil			1
	Warwick Castle		2	–
	cider at the *Bear and Baculus* (which Mifflin *would* call the *Bear and Bacillus*)			2½
	Bowling Green Inn, bed and breakfast		3	2
	Puncture		1	–
	Lunch, Kenilworth		1	6

	Kenilworth Castle	6
	Postcards	4
	Lemonade, Coventry	4
	Cider	2½
	Supper, Tamworth, *The Castle Hotel*	2 1
		16 5½
July 18	Johnson House, Lichfield	3
	cider at *The Three Crowns*	4
	postcard and shave	4
	The King's Head, bed and breakfast	3 7
	cider	2
	tip on road*	1½
	lunch, Uttoxeter	1 3
	cider, Ashbourne, *The Green Man*	3
	landlord's drink, Ashbourne*	1
	supper, *Newhaven House*	1 –
	lemonade, Buxton	3
	TOTAL	£1–4–1 ($5.78)

That is to say, 24 bob for two and a half days. We used to reckon that ten shillings a day would

*As far as I can remember, this was a gratuity to a rather tarnished subject who directed us at a fork in the road, near a railway crossing.

*This was a copper well lavished; for the publican, a ventripotent person with a liquid and glamorous brown eye, told us excellent gossip about Dr. Johnson and George Eliot, both heroes in that neighbourhood. "Yes," we said, "that man Eliot was a great writer," and he agreed.

do us very nicely, barring luxuries and emergencies. We attained a zealous proficiency in reckoning shillings and pence, and our fervour in posting our ledgers would have gladdened a firm of auditors. I remember lying on the coping of a stone bridge over the water of Teviot near Hawick, admiring the green-brown tint of the swift stream bickering over the stones. Mifflin was writing busily in his notebook on the other side of the bridge. I thought to myself, "Bless the lad, he's jotting down some picturesque notes of something that has struck his romantic eye." And just then he spoke—"Four and eleven pence half-penny so far to-day!"

Would I could retrogress over the devious and enchanting itinerary. The McGill route from Oxford to Auld Reekie is 417 miles; it was the afternoon of the ninth day when with thumping hearts we saw Arthur's Seat from a dozen miles away. Our goal was in sight!

There was a reason for all this pedalling madness. Ever since the days when we had wandered by Darby Creek, reading R. L. S. aloud to one another, we had planned this trip to the gray metropolis of the north. A score of sacred names had beckoned us, the haunts of the master. We knew them better than any other syllables in the world. Heriot Row, Princes Street, the Calton Hill, Duddingston Loch, Antigua Street, the Water of Leith, Colinton, Swanston, the Pentland Hills—

O my friends, do those names mean to you what they did to us? Then you are one of the brotherhood—what was to us then the sweetest brotherhood in the world!

In a quiet little hotel in Rutland Square we found decent lodging, in a large chamber which was really the smoking room of the house. The city was crowded with tourists on account of an expected visit of the King and Queen; every other room in the hotel was occupied. Greatly to our satisfaction we were known as "the smoking-room gentlemen" throughout our stay. Our windows opened upon ranks of corridor-cars lying on the Caledonian Railway sidings, and the clink and jar of buffers and coupling irons were heard all night long. I seem to remember that somewhere in his letters R. L. S. speaks of that same sound. He knew Rutland Square well, for his boyhood friend Charles Baxter lived there. Writing from Samoa in later years he says that one memory stands out above all others of his youth—Rutland Square. And while that was of course only the imaginative fervour of the moment, yet we were glad to know that in that quiet little cul de sac behind the railway terminal we were on ground well loved by Tusitala.

The first evening, and almost every twilight while we were in Auld Reekie, we found our way to 17 Heriot Row—famous address, which had

long been as familiar to us as our own. I think we expected to find a tablet on the house commemorating the beloved occupant; but no; to our surprise it was dark, dusty, and tenantless. A sign TO SELL was prominent. To take the name of the agent was easy. A great thought struck us. Could we not go over the house in the character of prospective purchasers? Mifflin and I went back to our smoking room and concocted a genteel letter to Messrs. Guild and Shepherd, Writers to the Signet.

Promptly came a reply (Scots business men answer at once).

16 Charlotte Square
Edinburgh
26th July, 1911

DEAR SIR,

17 HERIOT ROW

We have received your letter regarding this house. The house can be seen at any time, and if you will let us know when you wish to view it we shall arrange to have it opened.

We are,
Yours faithfully,
GUILD AND SHEPHERD.

Our hearts were uplifted, but now we were mightily embarrassed as to the figure we would cut

before the Writers to the Signet. You must remember that we were two young vagabonds in the earliest twenties, travelling with slim knapsacks, and much soiled by a fortnight on the road. I was in knickerbockers and khaki shirt; Mifflin in greasy gray flannels and subfusc Norfolk. Our only claims to gentility were our monocles. Always take a monocle on a vagabond tour: it is a never-failing source of amusement and passport of gentility. No matter how ragged you are, if you can screw a pane in your eye you can awe the yokel or the tradesman.

The private records of the firm of Guild and Shepherd doubtless show that on Friday, July 28, 1911, one of their polite young attachés, appearing as per appointment at 17 Heriot Row, was met by two eccentric young gentlemen, clad in dirty white flannel hats, waterproof capes, each with an impressive monocle. Let it be said to the honour of the attaché in question that he showed no symptoms of surprise or alarm. We explained, I think, that we were scouting for my father, who (it was alleged) greatly desired to settle down in Edinburgh. And we had presence of mind enough to inquire about plumbing, stationary wash-tubs, and the condition of the flues. I wish I could remember what rent was quoted.

He showed us all through the house; and you may imagine that we stepped softly and with beat-

ing hearts. Here we were on the very track of the Magician himself: his spirit whispered in the lonely rooms. We imagined R. L. S. as a little child, peering from the windows at dusk to see Leerie light the street-lamps outside—a quaint, thin, elvish face with shining brown eyes; or held up in illness by Cummie to see the gracious dawn heralded by oblongs of light in the windows across the Queen Street gardens. We saw the college lad, tall, with tweed coat and cigarette, returning to Heriot Row with an armful of books, in sad or sparkling mood. The house was dim and dusty: a fine entrance hall, large dining room facing the street—and we imagined Louis and his parents at breakfast. Above this, the drawing room, floored with parquet oak, a spacious and attractive chamber. Above this again, the nursery, and opening off it the little room where faithful Cummie slept. But in vain we looked for some sign or souvenir of the entrancing spirit. The room that echoed to his childish glee, that heard his smothered sobs in the endless nights of childish pain, the room where he scribbled and brooded and burst into gusts of youth's passionate outcry, is now silent and forlorn.

With what subtly mingled feelings we peered from room to room, seeing everything, and yet not daring to give ourselves away to the courteous young agent. And what was it he said?—"This

was the house of Lord So-and-so" (I forget the name)—"and incidentally, Robert Louis Stevenson lived here once. His signature occurs once or twice in the deeds."

Incidentally! . . .

Like many houses in Auld Reekie, 17 Heriot Row is built on a steep slant of ground, so that the rear of the house is a storey or more higher than the face. We explored the kitchens, laundries, store-rooms, and other "offices" with care, imagining that little "Smoutie" may have run here and there in search of tid-bits from the cook. Visions of that childhood, fifty years before, were almost as real as our own. We seemed to hear the young treble of his voice. That house was the home of the Stevensons for thirty years (1857–1887)—surely even the thirty years that have gone by since Thomas Stevenson died cannot have laid all those dear ghosts we conjured up.

We thanked our guide and took leave of him. If the firm of Guild and Shepherd should ever see this, surely they will forgive our innocent deception, for the honour of R. L. S. I wonder if anyone has yet put a tablet on the house? If not, Mifflin and I will do so, some day.

In the evenings we used to wander up to Heriot Row in the long Northern dusk, to sit on the front steps of number 17 waiting for Leerie to come and light the famous lamp which still stands

on the pavement in front of the dining-room windows:

For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the door,
And Leerie stops to light it as he lights so many more;
And O! before you hurry by with ladder and with light,
O Leerie, see a little child and nod to him to-night!

But no longer does Leerie "with lantern and with ladder come posting up the street." Nowadays he carries a long pole bearing a flame cunningly sheltered in a brass socket. But the Leerie of 1911 ("Leerie-light-the-lamps" is a generic nickname for all lamplighters in Scotland) was a pleasant fellow even if ladderless, and we used to have a cigar ready for him when he reached 17. We told him of R. L. S., of whom he had vaguely heard, and explained the sanctity of that particular lamp. He in turn talked freely of his craft, and learning that we were Americans he told us of his two sisters "in Pennsylvania, at 21 Thorn Street." He seemed to think Pennsylvania a town, but finally we learned that the Misses Leerie lived in Sewickley where they were doing well, and sending back money to the "kiddies." Good Leerie, I wonder do you still light the lamps on Heriot Row, or have you too seen redder beacons on Flanders fields?

One evening I remember we fell into discussion whether the lamp-post was still the same one that

R. L. S. had known. We were down on hands and knees on the pavement, examining the base of the pillar by match-light in search of possible dates. A very seedy and disreputable looking man passed, evidently regarding us with apprehension as detectives. Mifflin, never at a loss, remarked loudly "No, I see no footprints here," and as the ragged one passed hastily on with head twisted over his shoulder, we followed him. At the corner of Howe Street he broke into an uneasy shuffle, and Mifflin turned a great laugh into a Scotland Yard sneeze.

Howe Street crosses Heriot Row at right angles, only a few paces from No. 17. It dips sharply downhill toward the Water of Leith, and Mifflin and I used to stand at the corner and wonder just where took place the adventure with the lame boy which R. L. S. once described when setting down some recollections of childhood:

> In Howe street, round the corner from our house, I often saw a lame boy of rather a rough and poor appearance. He had one leg much shorter than the other, and wallowed in his walk, in consequence, like a ship in a seaway. I had read more than enough, in tracts and goody story books, of the isolation of the infirm; and after many days of bashfulness and hours of consideration, I finally accosted him, sheepishly enough I daresay, in these words: "Would you like to play with me?" I remember the expression, which sounds exactly like a

speech from one of the goody books that had nerved me to the venture. But the answer was not the one I had anticipated, for it was a blast of oaths. I need not say how fast I fled. This incident was the more to my credit as I had, when I was young, a desperate aversion to addressing strangers, though when once we had got into talk I was pretty certain to assume the lead. The last particular may still be recognized. About four years ago I saw my lame lad, and knew him again at once. He was then a man of great strength, rolling along, with an inch of cutty in his mouth and a butcher's basket on his arm. Our meeting had been nothing to him, but it was a great affair to me.

We strolled up the esplanade below the Castle, pausing in Ramsay's Gardens to admire the lighted city from above. In the valley between the Castle and Princes Street the pale blue mist rises at night like an exhalation from the old gray stones. The lamps shining through it blend in a delicate opalescent sheen, shot here and there with brighter flares. As the sky darkens the castle looms in silhouette, with one yellow square below the Half Moon Battery. "There are no stars like the Edinburgh street lamps," says R. L. S. Aye, and the brightest of them all shines on Heriot Row.

FRANK CONFESSIONS OF A PUBLISHER'S READER

[*Denis Dulcet, brother of the well-known poet Dunraven Dulcet and the extremely well-known literary agent Dove Dulcet, was for many years the head reader for a large publishing house. It was my good fortune to know him intimately, and when he could be severed from his innumerable manuscripts, which accompanied him everywhere, even in bed, he was very good company. His premature death from reader's cramp and mental hernia was a sad loss to the world of polite letters. Thousands of mediocre books would have been loaded upon the public but for his incisive and unerring judgment. When he lay on his deathbed, surrounded by half-read MSS., he sent for me, and with an air of extreme solemnity laid a packet in my hand. It contained the following confession, and it was his last wish that it should be published without alteration. I include it here in memory of my very dear friend.*]

IN MY youth I was wont to forecast various occupations for myself. Engine driver, tug-boat captain, actor, statesman, and wild animal trainer—such were the visions with which I put myself to sleep. Never did the merry life of

a manuscript reader swim into my ken. But here I am, buried elbow deep in the literary output of a commercial democracy. My only excuse for setting down these paragraphs is the hope that other more worthy members of the ancient and honourable craft may be induced to speak out in meeting. In these days when every type of man is interviewed, his modes of thinking conned and commented upon, why not a symposium of manuscript readers? Also I realized the other day, while reading a manuscript by Harold Bell Wright, that my powers are failing. My old trouble is gaining on me, and I may not be long for this world. Before I go to face the greatest of all Rejection Slips, I want to utter my message without fear or favour.

As a class, publishers' readers are not vocal. They spend their days and nights assiduously (in the literal sense) bent over mediocre stuff, poking and poring in the unending hope of finding something rich and strange. A gradual *stultitia* seizes them. They take to drink; they beat their wives; they despair of literature. Worst, and most preposterous, they one and all nourish secret hopes of successful authorship. You might think that the interminable flow of turgid blockish fiction that passes beneath their weary eyes would justly sicken them of the abominable gymnastic of writing. But no: the venom is in the blood.

Great men have graced the job—and got out of it as soon as possible. George Meredith was a reader once; so was Frank Norris; also E. V. Lucas and Gilbert Chesterton. One of the latter's comments on a manuscript is still preserved. Writing of a novel by a lady who was the author of many unpublished stories, all marked by perseverance rather than talent, he said, "Age cannot wither nor custom stale her infinite lack of variety." But alas, we hear too little of these gentlemen in their capacity as publishers' pursuivants. Patrolling the porches of literature, why did they not bequeath us some pandect of their experience, some rich garniture of commentary on the adventures that befell? But they, and younger men such as Coningsby Dawson and Sinclair Lewis, have gone on into the sunny hayfields of popular authorship and said nothing.

But these brilliant swallow-tailed migrants are not typical. Your true specimen of manuscript reader is the faithful old percheron who is content to go on, year after year, sorting over the literary pemmican that comes before him, inexhaustible in his love for the delicacies of good writing, happy if once or twice a twelve-month he chance upon some winged thing. He is not the pettifogging pilgarlic of popular conception: he is a devoted servant of letters, willing to take his thirty or forty dollars a week, willing to suffer the *peine*

forte et dure of his profession in the knowledge of honest duty done, writing terse and marrowy little essays on manuscripts, which are buried in the publishers' files. This man is an honour to the profession, and I believe there are many such. Certainly there are many who sigh wistfully when they must lay aside some cherished writing of their own to devote an evening to illiterate twaddle. Five book manuscripts a day, thirty a week, close to fifteen hundred a year—that is a fair showing for the head reader of a large publishing house.

One can hardly blame him if he sometimes grow skeptic or acid about the profession of letters. Of each hundred manuscripts turned in there will rarely be more than three or four that merit any serious consideration; only about one in a hundred will be acceptable for publication. And the others —alas that human beings should have invented ink to steal away their brains! "Only a Lady Barber" is the title of a novel in manuscript which I read the other day. Written in the most atrocious dialect, it betrayed an ignorance of composition that would have been discreditable to a polyp. It described the experiences of a female tonsor somewhere in Idaho, and closed with her Machiavellian manœuvres to entice into her shaving chair a man who had bilked her, so that she might slice his ear. No need to harrow you with more of the same kind. I read almost a score every week. Often

I think of a poem which was submitted to me once, containing this immortal couplet:

She damped a pen in the ooze of her brain and wrote a verse on the air,
A verse that had shone on the disc of the sun, had she chosen to set it there.

Let me beg you, my dears, leave the pen undamped unless your cerebral ooze really has something to impart. And then, once a year or so, when one is thinking that the hooves of Pegasus have turned into pigs' trotters, comes some Joseph Conrad, some Walter de la Mare, some Rupert Brooke or Pearsall Smith, to restore one's sanity.

Or else—what is indeed more frequent—the reader's fainting spirits are repaired not by the excellence of the manuscript before him, but by its absolute literary nonentity, a kind of intellectual Absolute Zero. Lack of merit may be so complete, so grotesque, that the composition affords to the sophistic eye a high order of comedy. A lady submits a poem in many cantos, beginning

Our heart is but a bundle of muscle
In which our passions tumble and tussle.

Another lady begins her novel with the following psychanalysis:

"Thus doth the ever-changing course of things run a perpetual circle." . . . She read the phrase and then

reflected, the cause being a continued prognostication, beginning and ending as it had done the day before, to-morrow and forever, maybe, of her own ailment, a paradoxical malady, being nothing more nor less than a pronounced case of malnutrition of the soul, a broken heart-cord, aggravated by a total collapse of that portion of the mentalities which had been bolstered up by undue pride, fallacious arguments, modern foibles and follies peculiar to the human species, both male and female, under favourable social conditions, found in provincial towns as well as in large cities and fashionable watering places.

But as a fitting anodyne to this regrettable case of soul malnutrition, let me append a description of a robuster female, taken verbatim from a manuscript (penned by masculine hand) which became a by-word in one publisher's office.

She was a beautiful young lady. She was a medium-sized, elegant figure, wearing a neatly-fitted travelling dress of black alpaca. Her raven-black hair, copious both in length and volume and figured like a deep river, rippled by the wind, was parted in the centre and combed smoothly down, ornamenting her pink temples with a flowing tracery that passed round to its modillion windings on a graceful crown. Her mouth was set with pearls adorned with elastic rubies and tuned with minstrel lays, while her nose gracefully concealed its own umbrage, and her eyes imparted a radiant glow to the azure of the sky. Jewels of plain gold were about her ears and her tapering strawberry hands, and a golden

chain, attached to a time-keeper of the same material, sparkled on an elegantly-rounded bosom that was destined to be pushed forward by sighs.

Let it not be thought that only the gracious sex can inspire such plenitude of meticulous portraiture! Here is a description of the hero in a novel by a man which appeared on my desk recently:

For some time past there had been appearing at the home of Sarah Ellenton, a man not over fifty years of age, well groomed and of the appearances of being on good terms with prosperity in many phases. His complexion was reddish. His hazel eyes deepset and close together were small and shifting. His nose ran down to a point in many lines, and from the point back to where it joined above his lip, the course was seen to swerve slightly to one side. His upper lip assumed almost any form and at all times. His mouth ran across his face in a thin line, curved by waves according to the smiles and expressions he employed. Below those features was a chin of fine proportions, showing nothing to require study, but in his jaw hinges there was a device that worked splendidly, when he wished to show unction and charity, by sending out his chin on such occasions in the kindest advances one would wish to see.

It was not long before Sarah became Mrs. John R. Quinley.

I hear that the authors are going to unionize themselves and join the A. F. of L. The word

"author" carries no sanctity with me: I have read too many of them. If their forming a trade union will better the output of American literature I am keen for it. I know that the professional reader has a jaundiced eye; insensibly he acquires a parallax which distorts his vision. Reading incessantly, now fiction, now history, poetry, essays, philosophy, science, exegetics, and what not, he becomes a kind of pantechnicon of slovenly knowledge; a knower of thousands of things that aren't so. Every crank's whim, every cretin's philosophy, is fired at him first of all. Every six months comes in the inevitable treatise on the fourth dimension or on making gold from sea-water, or on using moonlight to run dynamos, or on Pope Joan or Prester John. And with it all he must retain his simple-hearted faith in the great art of writing and in the beneficence of Gutenberg.

Manuscript readers need a trade union far worse than authors. There is all too little clannishness among us. We who are the helpless target for the slings and arrows of every writer who chooses to put pen on foolscap—might we not meet now and then for the humour of exchanging anecdotes? No class of beings is more in need of the consolations of intercourse. Perpend, brothers! Let us order a tierce of malmsey and talk it over! Perchance, too, a trade union among readers might

be of substantial advantage. Is it not sad that a man should read manuscripts all the sweet years of his maturity, and be paid forty dollars a week? Let us make sixty the minimum—or let there be a pogrom among the authors.

WILLIAM McFEE

M'Phee is the most tidy of chief engineers. If the leg of a cockroach gets into one of his slide-valves the whole ship knows it, and half the ship has to clean up the mess.

—RUDYARD KIPLING.

THE next time the Cunard Company commissions a new liner I wish they would sign on Joseph Conrad as captain, Rudyard Kipling as purser, and William McFee as chief engineer. They might add Don Marquis as deck steward and Hall Caine as chief-stewardess. Then I would like to be at Raymond and Whitcomb's and watch the clerks booking passages!

William McFee does not spell his name quite as does the Scotch engineer in Mr. Kipling's "Brugglesmith," but I feel sure that his attitude toward cockroaches in the slide-valve is the same. Unhappily I do not know Mr. McFee in his capacity as engineer; but I know and respect his feelings as a writer, his love of honourable and honest work, his disdain for blurb and blat. And by an author's attitude toward the purveyors of publicity, you may know him.

One evening about the beginning of December,

1915, I was sitting by the open fire in Hempstead, Long Island, a comparatively inoffensive young man, reading the new edition of Flecker's *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* issued that October by Martin Secker in London. Mr. Secker, like many other wise publishers, inserts in the back of his books the titles of other volumes issued by him. Little did I think, as I turned to look over Mr. Secker's announcements, that a train of events was about to begin which would render me, during the succeeding twelve months, a monomaniac in the eyes of my associates; so much so that when I was blessed with a son and heir just a year later I received a telegram signed by a dozen of them: "*Congratulations. Name him Casuals.*"

It was in that list of Mr. Secker's titles for the winter of 1915–16 that my eyes first rested, with a premonitory lust, upon the not-to-be-forgotten words.

MCFEE, WILLIAM: CASUALS OF THE SEA.

Who could fail to be stirred by so brave a title? At once I wrote for a copy.

My pocket memorandum for Sunday, January 9, 1916, contains this note:

"Finished reading *Casuals of the Sea*, a good book. H—— still laid up with bad ankle. In the P. M. we sat and read Bible aloud to Celia before the open fire."

My first impressions of "*Casuals of the Sea*, a good book" are interwoven with memories of Celia, a pious Polish serving maid from Pike County, Pennsylvania, who could only be kept in the house by nightly readings of another Good Book. She was horribly homesick (that was her first voyage away from home) and in spite of persistent Bible readings she fled after two weeks back to her home in Parker's Glen, Pa. She was our first servant, and we had prepared a beautiful room in the attic for her. However, that has nothing to do with Mr. McFee.

Casuals of the Sea is a novel whose sale of ten thousand copies in America is more important as a forecast of literary weather than many a popular distribution of a quarter million. Be it known by these presents that there are at least ten thousand librivora in this country who regard literature not merely as an emulsion. This remarkable novel, the seven years' study of a busy engineer occupied with boiler inspections, indicator cards, and other responsibilities of the Lord of Below, was the first really public appearance of a pen that will henceforth be listened to with respect.

Mr. McFee had written two books before *Casuals* was published, but at that time it was not easy to find any one who had read them. They were *Letters from an Ocean Tramp* (1908) and *Aliens* (1914); the latter has been rewritten since then

and issued in a revised edition. It is a very singular experiment in the art of narrative, and a rich commentary on human folly by a man who has made it his hobby to think things out for himself. And the new version is headlighted by a preface which may well take its place among the most interesting literary confessions of this generation, where Mr. McFee shows himself as that happiest of men, the artist who also has other and more urgent concerns than the whittling of a paragraph:

> Of art I never grow weary, but she calls me over the world. I suspect the sedentary art worker. Most of all I suspect the sedentary writer. I divide authors into two classes—genuine artists, and educated men who wish to earn enough to let them live like country gentlemen. With the latter I have no concern. But the artist knows when his time has come. In the same way I turned with irresistible longing to the sea, whereon I had been wont to earn my living. It is a good life and I love it. I love the men and their ships. I find in them a never-ending panorama which illustrates my theme, the problem of human folly.

Mr. McFee, you see, has some excuse for being a good writer because he has never had to write for a living. He has been writing for the fun of it ever since he was an apprentice in a big engineering shop in London twenty years ago. His profession deals with exacting and beautiful machinery, and he could no more do hack writing than hack

engineering. And unlike the other English realists of his generation who have cultivated a cheap flippancy, McFee finds no exhilaration in easy sneers at middle-class morality. He has a dirk up his sleeve for Gentility (how delightfully he flays it in *Aliens*) but he loves the middle classes for just what they are: the great fly-wheel of the world. His attitude toward his creations is that of a "benevolent marbleheart" (his own phrase). He has seen some of the seams of life, and like McAndrew he has hammered his own philosophy. It is a manly, just, and gentle creed, but not a soft one. Since the war began he has been on sea service, first on a beef-ship and transport in the Mediterranean, now as sub-lieutenant in the British Navy. When the war is over, and if he feels the call of the desk, Mr. McFee's brawny shoulder will sit in at the literary feast and a big handful of scribblers will have to drop down the dumb-waiter shaft to make room for him. It is a disconcerting figure in Grub Street, the man who really has something to say.

Publishers are always busy casting horoscopes for their new finds. How the benign planets must have twirled in happy curves when Harold Bell Wright was born, if one may credit his familiar mage, Elsbury W. Reynolds! But the fame that is built on publishers' press sheets does not dig very deep in the iron soil of time. We are all only raft-

builders, as Lord Dunsany tells us in his little parable; even the raft that Homer made for Helen must break up some day. Who in these States knows the works of Nat Gould? Twelve million of his dashing paddock novels have been sold in England, but he is as unknown here as is Preacher Wright in England. What is so dead as a dead best seller? Sometimes it is the worst sellers that come to life, roll away the stone, and an angel is found sitting laughing in the sepulchre. Let me quote Mr. McFee once more: "I have no taste for blurb, but I cannot refuse facts."

William M. P. McFee was born at sea in 1881. His father, an English skipper, was bringing his vessel toward the English coast after a long voyage. His mother was a native of Nova Scotia. They settled in New Southgate, a northern middle-class suburb of London, and here McFee was educated in the city schools of which the first pages of *Casuals of the Sea* give a pleasant description. Then he went to a well-known grammar school at Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk—what we would call over here a high school. He was a quiet, sturdy boy, and a first-rate cricketer.

At sixteen he was apprenticed to a big engineering firm in Aldersgate. This is one of the oldest streets in London, near the Charterhouse, Smithfield Market, and the famous "Bart's" Hospital. In fact, the office of the firm was built over one of

the old plague pits of 1665. His father had died several years before; and for the boy to become an apprentice in this well-known firm Mrs. McFee had to pay three hundred pounds sterling. McFee has often wondered just what he got for the money. However, the privilege of paying to be better than someone else is an established way of working out one's destiny in England, and at the time the mother and son knew no better than to conform. You will find this problem, and the whole matter of gentility, cuttingly set out in *Aliens*.

After three years as an apprentice, McFee was sent out by the firm on various important engineering jobs, notably a pumping installation at Tring, which he celebrated in a pamphlet of very creditable juvenile verses, for which he borrowed Mr. Kipling's mantle. This was at the time of the Boer War, when everybody in trousers who wrote verses was either imitating Kipling or reacting from him.

His engineering work gave young McFee a powerful interest in the lives and thoughts of the working classes. He was strongly influenced by socialism, and all his spare moments were spent with books. He came to live in Chelsea with an artist friend, but he had already tasted life at first hand, and the rather hazy atmosphere of that literary and artistic utopia made him uneasy. His afternoons were spent at the British Museum

reading room, his evenings at the Northampton Institute, where he attended classes, and even did a little lecturing of his own. Competent engineer as he was, that was never sufficient to occupy his mind. As early as 1902 he was writing short stories and trying to sell them.

In 1905 his uncle, a shipmaster, offered him a berth in the engine room of one of his steamers, bound for Trieste. He jumped at the chance. Since then he has been at sea almost continuously, save for one year (1912–13) when he settled down in Nutley, New Jersey, to write. The reader of *Aliens* will be pretty familiar with Nutley by the time he reaches page 416. "Netley" is but a thin disguise. I suspect a certain liveliness in the ozone of Nutley. Did not Frank Stockton write some of his best tales there? Some day some literary meteorologist will explain how these intellectual anticyclones originate in such places as Nutley (N. J.), Galesburg (Ill.), Port Washington (N. Y.), and Bryn Mawr (Pa.).

The life of a merchantman engineer would not seem to open a fair prospect into literature. The work is gruelling and at the same time monotonous. Constant change of scene and absence of home ties are (I speak subject to correction) demoralizing; after the coveted chief's certificate is won, ambition has little further to look forward to. A small and stuffy cabin in the belly of the

ship is not an inviting study. The works of Miss Corelli and Messrs. Haig and Haig are the only diversions of most of the profession. Art, literature, and politics do not interest them. Picture postcards, waterside saloons, and the ladies of the port are the glamour of life that they delight to honour.

I imagine that Mr. Carville's remarkable account (in *Aliens*) of his induction into the profession of marine engineering has no faint colour of reminiscence in Mr. McFee's mind. The filth, the intolerable weariness, the instant necessity of the tasks, stagger the easygoing suburban reader. And only the other day, speaking of his work on a seaplane ship in the British Navy, Mr. McFee said some illuminating things about the life of an engineer:

> It is Sunday, and I have been working. Oh, yes, there is plenty of work to do in the world, I find, wherever I go. But I cannot help wondering why Fate so often offers me the dirty end of the stick. Here I am, awaiting my commission as an engineer-officer of the R. N. R., and I am in the thick of it day after day. I don't mean, when I say "work," what you mean by work. I don't mean work such as my friend the Censor does, or my friend the N. E. O. does, nor my friends and shipmates, the navigating officer, the flying men, or the officers of the watch. I mean *work*, hard, sweating, nasty toil, coupled with responsibility. I am not alone. Most ships of the naval auxiliary are the same.
>
> I am anxious for you, a landsman, to grasp this

particular fragment of the sorry scheme of things entire, that in no other profession have the officers responsible for the carrying out of the work to toil as do the engineers in merchantmen, in transports. in fleet auxiliaries. You do not expect the major to clear the waste-pipe of his regimental latrines. You do not expect the surgeon to superintend the purging of his bandages. You do not expect the navigators of a ship to paint her hull. You do not expect an architect to make bricks (sometimes without straw). You do not expect the barrister to go and repair the lock on the law courts door, or oil the fans that ventilate the halls of justice. Yet you do, collectively, tolerate a tradition by which the marine engineer has to assist, overlook, and very often perform work corresponding precisely to the irrelevant chores mentioned above, which are in other professions relegated to the humblest and roughest of mankind. I blame no one. It is tradition, a most terrible windmill at which to tilt; but I conceive it my duty to set down once at least the peculiar nature of an engineer's destiny. I have had some years of it, and I know what I am talking about.

The point to distinguish is that the engineer not only has the responsibility, but he has, in nine cases out of ten, to do it. He, the officer, must befoul his person and derange his hours of rest and recreation, that others may enjoy. He must be available twenty-four hours a day, seven a days a week, at sea or in port. Whether chief or the lowest junior, he must be ready to plunge instantly to the succour of the vilest piece of mechanism on board. When coaling, his lot is easier imagined than described.

The remarkable thing to note is that Mr. McFee imposed upon these laborious years of physical toil a strenuous discipline of intellect as well. He is a born worker: patient, dogged, purposeful. His years at sea have been to him a more fruitful curriculum than that of any university. The patient sarcasm with which he speaks of certain Oxford youths of his acquaintance does not escape me. His sarcasm is just and on the target. He has stood as Senior Wrangler in a far more exacting *viva voce*—the University of the Seven Seas.

If I were a college president, out hunting for a faculty, I would deem that no salary would be too big to pay for the privilege of getting a man like McFee on my staff. He would not come, of course! But how he has worked for his mastery of the art of life and the theory thereof! When his colleagues at sea were dozing in their deck chairs or rattling the bones along the mahogany, he was sitting in his bunk, writing or reading. He has always been deeply interested in painting, and no gallery in any port he visited ever escaped him. These extracts from his letters will show whether his avocations were those of most engineers:

As I crossed the swing-bridge of the docks at Garston (Liverpool) the other day, and saw the tapering spars silhouetted against the pale sky, and the zinc-coloured river with its vague Cheshire shores dissolving in mist,

it occurred to me that if an indulgent genie were to appear and make me an offer I would cheerfully give up writing for painting. As it is, I see things in pictures and I spend more time in the Walker Gallery than in the library next door.

I've got about all I *can* get out of books, and now I don't relish them save as memories. The reason for my wish, I suppose, is that character, not incident, is my *métier*. And you can *draw* character, *paint* character, but you can't very well blat about it, can you?

I am afraid Balzac's job is too big for anybody nowadays. The worst of writing men nowadays is their horrible ignorance of how people live, of ordinary human possibilities.

A—— is always pitching into me for my insane ideas about "cheap stuff." He says I'm on the wrong tack and I'll be a failure if I don't do what the public wants. I said I didn't care a blue curse what the public wanted, nor did I worry much if I never made a big name. All I want is to do some fine and honourable work, to do it as well as I possibly could, and there my responsibility ended. . . . To hell with writing, I want to *feel* and *see!*

I am laying in a gallon of ink and a couple of cwt. of paper, to the amusement of the others, who imagine I am a merchant of some sort who has to transact business at sea because Scotland yard are after him!

His kit for every voyage, besides the gallon of ink and the hundredweight of foolscap, always included a score of books, ranging from Livy or Chaucer to Gorky and histories of Italian art. Happening to be in New York at the time of the

first exhibition in this country of "futurist" pictures, he entered eagerly into the current discussion in the newspaper correspondence columns. He wrote for a leading London journal an article on "The Conditions of Labour at Sea." He finds time to contribute to the *Atlantic Monthly* pieces of styptic prose that make zigzags on the sphygmograph of the editor. His letters written weekly to the artist friend he once lived with in Chelsea show a humorous and ironical mind ranging over all topics that concern cultivated men. I fancy he could out-argue many a university professor on Russian fiction, or Michelangelo, or steam turbines.

When one says that McFee found little intellectually in common with his enginering colleagues that is not to say that he was a prig. He was interested in everything that they were, but in a great deal more, too. And after obtaining his extra chief's certificate from the London Board of Trade, with a grade of ninety-eight per cent., he was not inclined to rest on his gauges.

In 1912 he took a walking trip from Glasgow to London, to gather local colour for a book he had long meditated; then he took ship for the United States, where he lived for over a year writing hard. Neither *Aliens* nor *Casuals of the Sea*, which he had been at work on for years, met with the favour of New York publishers. He carried his manu-

scripts around the town until weary of that amusement; and when the United Fruit Company asked him to do some engineering work for them he was not loath to get back into the old harness. And then came the war.

Alas, it is too much to hope that the Cunard Company will ever officer a vessel as I have suggested at the outset of these remarks. But I made my proposal not wholly at random, for in Conrad, Kipling, and McFee, all three, there is something of the same artistic creed. In those two magnificent prefaces—to *A Personal Record* and to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*—Conrad has set down, in words that should be memorable to every trafficker in ink, his conception of the duty of the man of letters. They can never be quoted too often:

"All ambitions are lawful except those which climb upward on the miseries or credulities of mankind. . . . The sight of human affairs deserves admiration and pity. And he is not insensible who pays them the undemonstrative tribute of a sigh which is not a sob, and of a smile which is not a grin."

That is the kind of tribute that Mr. McFee has paid to the Gooderich family in *Casuals of the Sea*. Somewhere in that book he has uttered the immortal remark that "The world belongs to the Enthusiast who keeps cool." I think there is much

of himself in that aphorism, and that the cool enthusiast, the benevolent marbleheart, has many fine things in store for us.

And there is one other sentence in *Casuals of the Sea* that lingers with me, and gives a just trace of the author's mind. It is worth remembering, and I leave it with you:

"She considered a trouble was a trouble and to be treated as such, instead of snatching the knotted cord from the hand of God and dealing murderous blows."[2]

RHUBARB

WE USED to call him Rhubarb, by reason of his long russet beard, which we imagined trailing in the prescriptions as he compounded them, imparting a special potency. He was a little German druggist—*Deutsche Apotheker*—and his real name was Friedrich Wilhelm Maximilian Schulz.

The village of Kings is tucked away in Long Island, in the Debatable Land where the generous boundary of New York City zigzags in a sporting way just to permit horse racing at Belmont Park. It is the most rustic corner of the City. To most New Yorkers it is as remote as Helgoland and as little known. It has no movie theatre, no news-stand, no cigar store, no village atheist. The railroad station, where one hundred and fifty trains a day do not stop, might well be mistaken for a Buddhist shrine, so steeped in discreet melancholy is it. The Fire Department consists of an old hose wagon first used to extinguish fires kindled by the Republicans when Rutherford B. Hayes was elected. In the weather-beaten Kings

Lyceum *East Lynne* is still performed once a year. People who find Quogue and Cohasset too exciting, move to Kings to cool off. The only way one can keep servants out there is by having the works of Harold Bell Wright in the kitchen for the cooks to read.

Stout-hearted Mr. Schulz came to Kings long ago. There is quite a little German colony there. With a delicatessen store on one side of him and a man who played the flute on the other, he felt hardly at all expatriated. The public house on the corner serves excellent *Rheingold*, and on winter evenings Friedrich and Minna would sit by the stove at the back of the drugstore with a jug of amber on the table and dream of Stuttgart.

It did not take me long to find out that apothecary Schulz was an educated man. At the rear of the store hung two diplomas of which he was very proud. One was a certificate from the Stuttgart Oberrealschule; the other his license to practise homicidal pharmacy in the German Empire, dated 1880. He had read the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, and found it more interesting than Henry James, he told me. Julia and I used to drop into his shop of an evening for a mug of hot chocolate, and always fell into talk. His Minna, a frail little woman with a shawl round her shoulders, would come out into the store and talk to us, too, and their pet dachshund would frolic at our feet.

They were a quaint couple, she so white and shy and fragile; he ruddy, sturdy, and positive.

It was not till I told him of my years spent at a German University that he really showed me the life that lay behind his shopman activity. We sometimes talked German together, and he took me into their little sitting room to see his photographs of home scenes at Stuttgart. It was over thirty years since he had seen German soil, but still his eyes would sparkle at the thought. He and Minna, being childless, dreamed of a return to the Fatherland as their great end in life.

What an alluring place the little drugstore was! I was fascinated by the rows and rows of gleaming bottles labelled with mysterious Latin abbreviations. There were cases of patent remedies—Mexican Mustang Liniment, Swamp Root, Danderine, Conway's Cobalt Pills, Father Finch's Febrifuge, Spencer's Spanish Specific. Soap, talcum, cold cream, marshmallows, tobacco, jars of rock candy, what a medley of paternostrums! And old Rhubarb himself, in his enormous baggy trousers—infinite breeches in a little room, as Julia used to say.

I wish I could set him down in all his rich human flavour. The first impression he gave was one of cleanness and good humour. He was always in shirtsleeves, with suspenders forming an X across his broad back; his shirt was fresh laundered, his

glowing beard served as cravat. He had a slow, rather ponderous speech, with deep gurgling gutturals and a decrescendo laugh, slipping farther and farther down into his larynx. Once, when we got to know each other fairly well, I ventured some harmless jest about Barbarossa. He chuckled; then his face grew grave. "I wish Minna could have the beard," he said. "Her chest is not strong. It would be a fine breast-protector for her. But me, because I am strong like a horse, I have it all!" He thumped his chest ruefully with his broad, thick hand.

Despite his thirty years in America, good Schulz was still the Deutsche Apotheker and not at all the American druggist. He had installed a soda fountain as a concession, but it puzzled him sorely, and if he was asked for anything more complex than chocolate ice-cream soda he would shake his head solemnly and say: "That I have not got." Motorists sometimes turned off the Jericho turnpike and stopped at his shop asking for banana splits or grapejuice highballs, or frosted pineapple fizz. But they had to take chocolate ice-cream soda or nothing. Sometimes in a fit of absent-mindedness he would turn his taps too hard and the charged water would spout across the imitation marble counter. He would wag his beard deprecatingly and mutter a shamefaced apology, smiling again when the little black dachshund came trotting

to sniff at the spilt soda and rasp the wet floor with her bright tongue.

At the end of September he shut up the soda fountain gladly, piling it high with bars of castile soap or cartons of cod liver oil. Then Minna entered into her glory as the dispenser of hot chocolate which seethed and sang in a tall silvery tank with a blue gas burner underneath. This she served in thick china mugs with a clot of whipped cream swimming on top. Julia would buy a box of the cheese crackers that Schulz kept in stock specially for her, and give several to the sleek little black bitch that stood pleading with her quaint turned-out fore-feet placed on Julia's slippers. Schulz, beaming serenely behind a pyramid of "intense carnation" bottles on his perfume counter, would chuckle at the antics of his pet. "Ah, he is a wise little dog!" he would exclaim with naïve pride. "He knows who is friendly!" He always called the little dog "he," which amused us.

On Sunday afternoon the drugstore was closed from one to five, and during those hours Schulz took his weekly walk, accompanied by the dog which plodded desperately after him on her short legs. Sometimes we met him swinging along the by-roads, flourishing a cudgel and humming to himself. Whenever he saw a motor coming he halted, the little black dachshund would look

up at him, and he would stoop ponderously down, pick her up and carry her in his arms until all danger was past

As the time went on he and I used to talk a good deal about the war. Minna, pale and weary, would stand behind her steaming urn, keeping the shawl tight round her shoulders; Rhubarb and I would argue without heat upon the latest news from the war zone. I had no zeal for converting the old fellow from his views; I understood his sympathies and respected them. Reports of atrocities troubled him as much as they did me; but the spine of his contention was that the German army was unbeatable. He got out his faded discharge ticket from the Wurtemberger Landsturm to show the perfect system of the Imperial military organization. In his desk at the back of the shop he kept a war map cut from a Sunday supplement and over this we would argue, Schulz breathing hard and holding his beard aside in one hand as he bent over the paper. When other customers came in, he would put the map away with a twinkle, and the topic was dropped. But often the glass top of the perfume counter was requisitioned as a large-scale battle-ground, and the pink bottle of rose water set to represent Von Hindenburg while the green phial of smelling salts was Joffre or Brussilov. We fought out the battle of the Marne pretty completely on the perfume counter. "*Warte*

doch!" he would cry. "Just wait! You will see! All the world is against her, but Germany will win!"

Poor Minna was always afraid her husband and I would quarrel. She knew well how opposite our sympathies were; she could not understand that our arguments were wholly lacking in personal animus. When I told him of the Allies' growing superiority in aircraft Rhubarb would retort by showing me clippings about the German trench fortifications, the "pill boxes" made of solid cement. I would speak of the deadly curtain fire of the British; he would counter with mysterious allusions to Krupp. And his conclusions were always the same. "Just wait! Germany will win!" And he would stroke his beard placidly. "But, Fritz!" Minna used to cry in a panic, "The gentleman might think differently!" Rhubarb and I would grin at each other, I would buy a tin of tobacco, and we would say good-night.

How dear is the plain, unvarnished human being when one sees him in a true light! Schulz's honest, kindly face seemed to me to typify all that I knew of the finer qualities of the Germans; the frugal simplicity, the tenderness, the proud, stiff rectitude. He and I felt for each other, I think, something of the humorous friendliness of the men in the opposing trenches. Chance had cast us on different sides of the matter. But when I felt

tempted to see red, to condemn the Germans *en masse*, to chant litanies of hate, I used to go down to the drugstore for tobacco or a mug of chocolate. Rhubarb and I would argue it out.

But that was a hard winter for him. The growing anti-German sentiment in the neighbourhood reduced his business considerably. Then he was worried over Minna. Often she did not appear in the evenings, and he would explain that she had gone to bed. I was all the more surprised to meet her one very snowy Sunday afternoon, sloshing along the road in the liquid mire, the little dog squattering sadly behind, her small black paws sliding on the ice-crusted paving. "What on earth are you doing outdoors on a day like this?" I said.

"Fritz had to go to Brooklyn, and I thought he would be angry if Lischen didn't get her airing."

"You take my advice and go home and get into some dry clothes," I said severely.

Soon after that I had to go away for three weeks. I was snowbound in Massachusetts for several days; then I had to go to Montreal on urgent business. Julia went to the city to visit her mother while I was away, so we had no news from Kings.

We got back late one Sunday evening. The plumbing had frozen in our absence; when I lit the furnace again, pipes began to thaw and for an hour or so we had a lively time. In the course of a battle with a pipe and a monkey wrench I sprained

a thumb, and the next morning I stopped at the drugstore on my way to the train to get some iodine.

Rhubarb was at his prescription counter weighing a little cone of white powder in his apothecary's scales. He looked far from well. There were great pouches under his eyes; his beard was unkempt; his waistcoat spotted with food stains. The lady waiting received her package, and went out. Rhubarb and I grasped hands.

"Well," I said, "what do you think now about the war? Did you see that the Canadians took a mile of trenches five hundred yards deep last week? Do you still think Germany will win?" To my surprise he turned on his heel and began apparently rummaging along a row of glass jars. His gaze seemed to be fastened upon a tall bottle containing ethyl alcohol. At last he turned round. His broad, naïve face was quivering like blancmange.

"What do I care who wins?" he said. "What does it matter to me any more? Minna is dead. She died two weeks ago of pneumonia."

As I stood, not knowing what to say, there was a patter along the floor. The little dachshund came scampering into the shop and frisked about my feet.

THE HAUNTING BEAUTY OF STRYCHNINE

A LITTLE-KNOWN TOWN OF UNEARTHLY BEAUTY

SLOWLY, reluctantly (rather like a *vers libre* poem) the quaint little train comes to a stand. Along the station platform each of the *fiacre* drivers seizes a large dinner-bell and tries to outring the others. You step from the railway carriage—and instantly the hellish din of those droschky bells faints into a dim, far-away tolling. Your eye has caught the superb sweep of the Casa Grande beetling on its crag. Over the sapphire canal where the old men are fishing for sprats, above the rugged scarp where the blue-bloused *ouvriers* are quarrying the famous champagne cheese, you see the Gothic transept of the Palazzo Ginricci, dour against a nacre sky. An involuntary tremolo eddies down your spinal marrow. The Gin Palace, you murmur. . . . At last you are in Strychnine.

Unnoted by Baedeker, unsung by poets, un-

rhapsodied by press agents—there lurks the little town of Strychnine in that far and untravelled corner where France, Russia, and Liberia meet in an unedifying Zollverein. The strychnine baths have long been famous among physicians, but the usual ruddy tourist knows them not. The sorrowful ennui of a ten-hour journey on the B. V. D. *Chemise de fer* (with innumerable examinations of luggage), while it has kept out the contraband Swiss cheese which is so strictly interdicted, has also kept away the rich and garrulous tourist. But he who will endure to the end that tortuous journey among flat fields of rye and parsimony, will find himself well rewarded. The long tunnel through Mondragone ends at length, and you find yourself on the platform with the droschky bells clanging in your ears and the ineffable majesty of the Casa Grande crag soaring behind the jade canal.

The air was chill, and I buttoned my surtout tightly as I stepped into the curious seven-wheeled *sforza* lettered *Hôtel Decameron*. We rumbled *andante espressivo* over the hexagonal cobbles of the Chaussée d'Arsenic, crossed the mauve canal and bent under the hanging cliffs of the cheese quarries. I could see the fishwives carrying great trays of lampreys and lambrequins toward the fish market. It is curious what quaintly assorted impressions one receives in the first few minutes in a

strange place. I remember noticing a sausage kiosk in the *markt-platz* where a man in a white coat was busily selling hot icons. They are delivered fresh every hour from the Casa Grande (the great cheese cathedral) on the cliff.

The Hôtel Decameron is named after Boccaccio, who was once a bartender there. It stands in a commanding position on the Place Nouveau Riche overlooking the Casino and the odalisk erected by Edward VII in memory of his cure. After two weeks of the strychnine baths the merry monarch is said to have called for a corncob pipe and a plate of onions, after which he made his escape by walking over the forest track to the French frontier, although previous to this he had not walked a kilometer without a cane since John Bull won the Cowes regatta. The *haut ton* of the section in which the Hôtel Decameron finds itself can readily be seen by the fact that the campanile of the Duke of Marmalade fronts on the rue Sauterne, just across from the barroom of the Hôtel. The antiquaries say there is an underground corridor between the two.

The fascinations of a stay in Strychnine are manifold. I have a weak heart, so I did not try the baths, although I used to linger on the terrace of the Casino about sunset to hear Tinpanni's band and eat a bronze bowl of Kerosini's gooseberry fool. I spent a great deal of my time explor-

ing the chief glory of the town, the Casa Grande, which stands on the colossal crag honeycombed underneath with the shafts and vaults of the cheese mine. There is nothing in the world more entrancing than to stand (with a vinaigrette at one's nose) on the ramp of the Casa, looking down over the ochre canal, listening to the hoarse shouts of the workmen as they toil with pick and shovel, laying bare some particularly rich lode of the pale, citron-coloured cheese which will some day make Strychnine a place of *pélérinage* for all the world. *Pay homage to the fromage* is a rough translation of the motto of the town, which is carved in old Gothic letters on the apse of the Casa itself. Limburg, Gruyère, Alkmaar, Neufchâtel, Camembert, and Hoboken—all these famous cheeses will some day pale into whey before the puissance of the Strychnine curd. I was signally honoured by an express invitation of the burgomaster to be present at a meeting of the Cheesemongers' Guild at the Rathaus. The Kurdmeister, who is elected annually by the town council, spoke most eloquently on the future of the cheese industry, and a curious rite was performed. Before the entrance of the ceremonial cheese, which is cut by the Kurdmeister himself, all those present donned oxygen masks similar to those devised by the English to combat the German poison-gas. And I learned that oxygen helmets are worn by

the workmen in the quarries to prevent prostration.

It was with unfeigned regret that I found my fortnight over. I would gladly have lingered in the medieval cloisters of the Gin Palace, and sat for many mornings under the pistachio trees on the terrace sipping my *verre* of native wine. But duties recalled me to the beaten paths of travel, and once more I drove in the old-fashioned ambulance to catch my even more old-fashioned train. The B. V. D. trains only leave Strychnine when there is a stern wind, as otherwise the pungent fumes of the cheese carried in the luggage van are very obnoxious to the passengers. Some day some American efficiency expert will visit the town and teach them to couple their luggage van on to the rear of the train. But till then Strychnine will be to me, and to every other traveller who may chance that way, a fragrant memory.

And as you enter the tunnel, the last thing you see is the onyx canal and the old women fishing for lambrequins and palfreys.

INGO

"ZUM ANDENKEN"

THE first night we sat down at the inn table for supper I lost my heart to Ingo.

Ingo was just ten years old. He wore a little sailor suit of blue and white striped linen; his short trousers showed chubby brown calves above his white socks; his round golden head cropped close in the German fashion. His blue eyes were grave and thoughtful. By great good fortune we sat next each other at table, and in my rather grotesque German I began a conversation. How careful Ingo was not to laugh at the absurdities of my syntax! How very courteous he was!

Looking back into the mysterious panorama of pictures that we call memory, I can see the long dining room of the old gasthaus in the Black Forest, where two Americans on bicycles appeared out of nowhere and asked for lodging. They were the first Americans who had ever been seen in that remote valley, and the Gasthaus zur Krone ("the Crown Inn") found them very amusing.

Perhaps you have never seen a country tavern in the Schwarzwald? Then you have something to live for. A long, low building with a moss-grown roof and tremendous broad eaves sheltering little galleries; and the barn under the same roof for greater warmth in winter. One side of the house was always strong with an excellent homely aroma of cow and horse; one had only to open a door in the upper hall, a door that looked just like a bedroom entrance, to find oneself in the haymow. There I used to lie for hours reading, and listening to the summer rain thudding on the shingles. Sitting in the little gallery under the eaves, looking happily down the white road where the yellow coach brought the mail twice a day, one could see the long vista of the valley, the women with bright red jackets working in the fields, and the dark masses of forest on the hillside opposite. There was much rain that summer; the mountains were often veiled all day long in misty shreds of cloud, and the two Americans sat with pipes and books at the long dining table, greeted by gales of laughter on the part of the robust landlord's niece when they essayed the native idiom. "*Sie arbeiten immer!*" she used to say; "*Sie werden krank!*" ("You're always working; you'll be ill!")

There is a particular poignance in looking back now on those happy days two years before the war. Nowhere in all the world, I suppose, are

there more cordial, warmhearted, simple, human people than the South Germans. On the front of the inn there was a big yellow metal sign, giving the military number of the district, and the mobilization points for the Landsturm and the Landwehr, and we realized that even here the careful organization of the military power had numbered and ticketed every village. But what did it mean to us? War was a thing unthinkable in those days. We bicycled everywhere, climbed mountains, bathed in waterfalls, chatted fluent and unorthodox German with everyone we met, and played games with Ingo.

Dear little Ingo! At the age when so many small boys are pert, impudent, self-conscious, he was the simplest, happiest, gravest little creature. His hobby was astronomy, and often I would find him sitting quietly in a corner with a book about the stars. On clear evenings we would walk along the road together, in the mountain hush that was only broken by the brook tumbling down the valley, and he would name the constellations for me. His little round head was thrilled through and through by the immense mysteries of space; sometimes at meal times he would fall into a muse, forgetting his beef and gravy. Once I asked him at dinner what he was thinking of. He looked up with his clear gray-blue eyes and flashing smile: "*Von den Sternen!*" ("Of the stars.")

The time after supper was reserved for games, in which Wolfgang, Ingo's smaller brother (aged seven), also took part. Our favourite pastimes were "Irrgarten" and "Galgenspiel," in which we found enormous amusement. Galgenspiel was Ingo's translation of "Hangman," a simple pastime which had sometimes entertained my own small brother on rainy days; apparently it was new in Germany. One player thinks of a word, and sets down on paper a dash for each letter in this word. It is the task of the other to guess the word, and he names the letters of the alphabet one by one. Every time he mentions a letter that is contained in the word you must set it down in its proper place in the word, but every time he mentions a letter that is not in the word you draw a portion of a person depending from a gallows; the object of course being for him to guess the word before you finish drawing the effigy. We played the game entirely in German, and I can still see Ingo's intent little face bent over my preposterous drawings, cudgelling his quick and happy little brain to spot the word before the hangman could finish his grim task. "Quick, Ingo!" I would cry. "You will get yourself hung!" and he would laugh in his own lovable way. There was never a jollier way of learning a foreign language than by playing games with Ingo.

The other favourite pastime was drawing mazes

on paper, labyrinths of winding paths which must be traversed by a pencil point. The task was to construct a maze so complicated that the other could not find his way out, starting at the middle. We would sit down at opposite ends of the room to construct our mysteries of blind alleys and misleading passages, then each one would be turned loose in the "irrgarten" drawn by the other. Ingo would stand at my side while I tried in obstinate stupidity to find my way through his little puzzle; his eager heart inside his sailor blouse would pound like a drum when I was nearing the dangerous places where an exit might be won. He would hold his breath so audibly, and his blue eyes would grow so anxious, that I always knew when not to make the right turning, and my pencil would wander on in hopeless despair until he had mercy on me and led me to freedom.

After lunch every day, while waiting for the mail-coach to come trundling up the valley, Ingo and I used to sit in the little balcony under the eaves, reading. He introduced me to his favourite book *Till Eulenspiegel*, and we sped joyously through the adventures of that immortal buffoon of German folklore. We took turns reading aloud: every paragraph or so I would appeal for an explanation of something. Generally I understood well enough, but it was such a delight to hear Ingo strive to make the meaning plain. What a

puckering of his bright boyish forehead, what a grave determination to elucidate the fable! What a mingling of ecstatic pride in having a grown man as pupil, with deference due to an elder. Ingo was a born gentleman and in his fiercest transports of glee never forgot his manners. I would make some purposely ludicrous shot at the sense, and he would double up with innocent mirth. His clear laughter would ring out, and his mother, pacing a digestive stroll on the highway below us, would look up crying in the German way, "*Gott! wie er freut sich!*" The progress of our reading was held up by these interludes, but I could never resist the temptation to start Ingo explaining.

Ingo having made me free of his dearest book, it was only fair to reciprocate. So one day Lloyd and I bicycled down to Freiburg, and there, at a heavenly "bookhandler's," I found a copy of *Treasure Island* in German. Then there was revelry in the balcony! I read the tale aloud, and I wish R. L. S. might have seen the shining of Ingo's eyes! Alas, the vividness of the story interfered with the little lad's sleep, and his mother was a good deal disturbed about this violent yarn we were reading together. How close he used to sit beside me as we read of the dark doings at the Admiral Benbow; and how his face would fall when, clear and hollow from the sounding-board of the hills, came the quick *clop, clop* of the mailman's horses.

I don't know anything that has ever gone deeper in my memory than those hours spent with Ingo. I have a little snapshot of him I took the misty, sorrowful morning when I bicycled away to Basel and left the Gasthaus zur Krone in its mountain valley. The blessed little lad stands up erect and stiff in the formal German way, and I can see his blue eyes alight with friendliness, and a little bit unhappy because his eccentric American comrade was going away and there would be no more afternoons with *Till Eulenspiegel* on the balcony. I wonder if he thinks of me as often as I do of him? He gave me a glimpse into the innocent heaven of a child's heart that I can never forget. By now he is approaching sixteen, and I pray that whatever the war may take away from me it will spare me my Ingo. It is strange and sad to recall that his parting present to me was a drawing of a Zeppelin, upon which he toiled manfully all one afternoon. I still have it in my scrap-book.

And I wonder if he ever looks in the old copy of *Hauff's Märchen* that I bought for him in Freiburg, and sees the English words that he was to learn how to translate when he should grow older. As I remember them, they ran like this:

For Ingo to learn English will very easy be
If someone is as kind to him as he has been to me;
Plays games with him, reads fairy tales, corrects all his
mistakes,

And never laughs too loudly at the blunders that he
makes—
Then he will find, as I did, how well two pleasures blend:
To learn a foreign language, and to make a foreign
friend.

If I love anybody in the world, I love Ingo. And that is why I cannot get up much enthusiasm for hymns of hate.

HOUSEBROKEN

AFTER Simmons had been married two years he began to feel as though he needed a night off. But he hesitated to mention the fact, for he knew his wife would feel hurt to think that he could dream of an evening spent elsewhere than in their cosy sitting room. However, there were no two ways about it: the old unregenerate male in Simmons yearned for something more exciting than the fireside armchair, the slippers and smoking jacket, and the quiet game of cards. Visions of the old riotous evenings with the boys ran through his mind; a billiard table and the click of balls; the jolly conversations at the club, and glass after glass of that cold amber beer. The large freedom of the city streets at night, the warm saloons on every corner, the barrooms with their pyramids of bottles flashing in the gaslight—these were the things that made a man's life amusing. And here he was cooped up in a little cage in the suburbs like a tame cat!

Thoughts of this kind had agitated Simmons for a long time, and at last he said something to

Ethel. He had keyed himself up to meet a sharp retort, some sarcastic comment about his preferring a beer garden to his own home, even an outburst of tears. But to his amazement Ethel took it quite calmly.

"Why, yes, of course, dear," she said. "It'll do you good to have an evening with your friends."

A little taken aback, he asked whether she would rather he didn't go.

"Why, no," she answered. "I shall have a lovely time. I won't be lonely."

This was on Monday. Simmons planned to go out on Friday night, meeting the boys for dinner at the club, and after that they would spend the evening at Boelke's bowling alley. All the week he went about in a glow of anticipation. At the office he spoke in an offhand way of the pleasant evenings a man can have in town, and pitied the prosaic beggars who never stir from the house at night.

On Friday evening he came home hurriedly, staying just long enough to shave and change his collar. Ethel had on a pretty dress and seemed very cheerful. A strange sinking came over him as he saw the familiar room shining with firelight and the shabby armchair.

"Would you rather I stayed at home?" he asked.

"Not a bit," she said, quite as though she meant it. "Diana has a steak in the oven, and I've got a new book to read. I won't wait up for you."

He kissed her and went off.

When he got on the trolley a sudden revulsion struck him. He was tired and wanted to go home. Why on earth spend the evening with a lot of drunken rowdies when he might be at his own hearth watching Ethel's face bent over her sewing? He saw little enough of her anyway.

At the door of the club he halted. Inside, the crowd was laughing, shouting jests, dicing for cocktails. Suddenly he turned and ran.

He cursed himself for a fool, but none the less an irresistible force seemed to draw him home. On the car he sat glum and silent, wondering how all the other men could read their papers so contentedly.

At last he reached the modest little suburb. He hurried along the street and had almost entered his gate when he paused.

Through the half-drawn curtains he could see Ethel sitting comfortably by the lamp. She was reading, and the cat was in her lap. His heart leaped with a great throb. But how could he go in now? It was barely eight o'clock. After all his talk about a man's need of relaxation and masculine comradeship—why, she would never stop laughing! He turned and tiptoed away.

That evening was a nightmare for Simmons. Opposite his house was a little suburban park, and thither he took himself. For a long while he sat on a bench cursing. Twice he started for the trolley, and again returned. It was a damp autumn night; little by little the chill pierced his light coat and he sneezed. Up and down the little park he tramped, biting a dead cigar. Once he went as far as the drugstore and bought a box of crackers.

At last—it seemed years—the church chimes struck ten and he saw the lights go out in his house. He forced himself to make twenty-five more trips around the gravel walk and then he could wait no longer. Shivering with weariness and cold, he went home.

He let himself in with his latch key and tiptoed upstairs. He leaned over the bed and Ethel stirred sleepily.

"What time is it, dear?" she murmured. "You're early, aren't you?"

"One o'clock," he lied bravely—and just then the dining-room clock struck half-past ten and supported him.

"Did you have a good time?"

"Bully—perfectly bully," he said. "There's nothing like a night with the boys now and then."

A CASUAL OF THE SEA

He that will learn to pray, let him go to sea.
—George Herbert.

BOOKS sometimes make surprising connections with life. Fifteen-year-old Tommy Jonkers, shipping as O. S. (ordinary seaman) on the S. S. *Fernfield* in Glasgow in 1911, could hardly have suspected that the second engineer would write a novel and put him in it; or that that same novel would one day lift him out of focsle and galley and set him working for a publishing house on far-away Long Island. Is it not one more proof of the surprising power of the written word?

For Tommy is not one of those who expect to find their names in print. The mere sight of his name on a newspaper page, in an article I wrote about him, brought (so he naïvely told me) tears to his eyes. Excellent, simple-hearted Tommy! How little did you think, when you signed on to help the *Fernfield* carry coal from Glasgow to Alexandria, that the long arm of the Miehle press was already waiting for you; that thousands of

good people reading a certain novel would be familiar with your "round rosy face and clear sea-blue eyes."

"Tommy" (whose real name is Drevis) was born in Amsterdam in 1896. His father was a fireman at sea, and contributed next to nothing to the support of Tommy and his pretty little sister Greta. They lived with their grandmother, near the quays in Amsterdam, where the masts of ships and the smell of tar interfered with their lessons. Bread and treacle for breakfast, black beans for lunch, a fine thick stew and plenty more bread for supper—that and the Dutch school where he stood near the top of his class are what Tommy remembers best of his boyhood. His grandmother took in washing, and had a hard time keeping the little family going. She was a fine, brusque old lady and as Tommy went off to school in the mornings she used to frown at him from the upstairs window because his hands were in his pockets. For as everybody knows, only slouchy good-for-nothings walk to school with pocketed hands.

Tommy did so well in his lessons that he was one of the star pupils given the privilege of learning an extra language in the evenings. He chose English because most of the sailors he met talked English, and his great ambition was to be a seaman. His uncle was a quartermaster in the Dutch

navy, and his father was at sea; and Tommy's chance soon came.

After school hours he used to sell postcards, cologne, soap, chocolates, and other knicknacks to the sailors, to earn a little cash to help his grandmother. One afternoon in the spring of 1909 he was down on the docks with his little packet of wares, when a school friend came running to him.

"Drevis, Drevis!" he shouted, "they want a mess-room boy on the *Queen Eleanor!*"

It didn't take Drevis long to get aboard the *Queen Eleanor*, a British tramp out of Glasgow, bound for Hamburg and Vladivostok. He accosted the chief engineer, his blue eyes shining eagerly.

"Yes," says the chief, "I need a mess-room steward right away—we sail at four o'clock."

"Try me!" pipes Drevis. (Bless us, the boy was barely thirteen!)

The chief roars with laughter.

"Too small!" he says.

Drevis insisted that he was just the boy for mess-room steward.

"Well," says the chief, "go home and put on a pair of long pants and come back again. Then we'll see how you look!"

Tommy ran home rejoicing. His Uncle Hendrick was a small man, and Tommy grabbed a pair of his trousers. Thus fortified, he hastened

back to the *Queen Eleanor*. The chief cackled, but he took him on at two pounds five a month.

Tommy didn't last long as mess-room boy. He broke so many cups the engineers had to drink out of dippers, and they degraded him to cabin boy at a pound a month. Even as cabin boy he was no instant success. He used to forget to empty the chief's slop-pail, and the water would overflow the cabin. He felt the force of a stout sea boot not a few times in learning the golden rubric of the tramp steamer's cabin boy.

"Drevis" was a strange name to the English seamen, and they christened him "Tommy," and that handle turns him still.

Tommy's blue eyes and honest Netherland grin and easy temper kept him friendly with all the world. The winds of chance sent him scudding about the globe, a true casual of the seas. His first voyage as A. B. was on the *Fernfield* in 1911, and there he met a certain Scotch engineer. This engineer had a habit of being interested in human problems, and Tommy's guileless phiz attracted him. Under his tutelage Tommy acquired a thirst for promotion, and soon climbed to the rank of quartermaster.

One thing that always struck Tommy was the number of books the engineer had in his cabin. A volume of Nat Gould Ouida or *The Duchess* would be the largest library Tommy would have

found in the other bunks; but here, before his wondering gaze, were Macaulay, Gibbon, Gorki, Conrad, Dickens, Zola, Shakespeare, Montaigne, Chaucer, Shaw, and what not. And what would Master Tommy have said had he known that his friend, even then, was working on a novel in which he, Tommy, would play an important rôle!

The years went by. On sailing ships, on steam tramps, on private yachts, as seaman, as quartermaster, as cook's helper, Tommy drifted about the world. One day when he was twenty years old he was rambling about New York just before sailing for Liverpool on the steam yacht *Alvina*. He was one of a strictly neutral crew (the United States was still neutral in those days) signed on to take a millionaire's pet plaything across the wintry ocean. She had been sold to the Russian Government.

Tommy was passing through the arcade of the Pennsylvania Station when his eye fell upon the book shop there. He was startled to see in the window a picture of the Scotch engineer—his best friend, the only man in the world who had ever been like a father to him. He knew that the engineer was far away in the Mediterranean, working on an English transport. He scanned the poster with amazement.

Apparently his friend had written a book. Tommy, like a practical seaman, went to the heart of the matter. He went into the shop and bought

the book. He fell into talk with the bookseller, who had read the book. He told the bookseller that he had known the author, and that for years they had served together on the same vessels at sea. He told how the writer, who was the former second engineer of the *Fernfield*, had done many things for the little Dutch lad whose own father had died at sea. Then came another surprise.

"I believe you're one of the characters in the story," said the bookseller.

It was so. The book was *Casuals of the Sea*, the author, William McFee, who had been a steamship engineer for a dozen years; and Drevis Jonkers found himself described in full in the novel as "Drevis Noordhof," and playing a leading part in the story. Can you imagine the simple sailor's surprise and delight? Pleased beyond measure, in his soft Dutch accent liberally flavoured with cockney he told the bookseller how Mr. McFee had befriended him, had urged him to go on studying navigation so that he might become an officer; and that though they had not met for several years he still receives letters from his friend, full of good advice about saving his money, where to get cheap lodgings in Brooklyn, and not to fall into the common error of sailors in thinking that Hoboken and Passyunk Avenue are all America. And Tommy went back to his yacht

chuckling with delight, with a copy of *Casuals of the Sea* under his arm.

Here my share in the adventure begins. The bookseller, knowing my interest in the book, hastened to tell me the next time I saw him that one of the characters in the story was in New York. I wrote to Tommy asking him to come to see me. He wrote that the *Alvina* was to sail the next day, and he could not get away. I supposed the incident was closed.

Then I saw in the papers that the *Alvina* had been halted in the Narrows by a United States destroyer, the Government having suspected that her errand was not wholly neutral. Rumour had it that she was on her way to the Azores, there to take on armament for the house of Romanoff. She was halted at the Quarantine Station at Staten Island, pending an investigation.

Then enters the elbow of coincidence. Looking over some books in the very same bookshop where Tommy had bought his friend's novel, I overheard another member of the *Alvina's* crew asking about *Casuals of the Sea*. His chum Tommy had told him about his adventure, and he, too, was there to buy one. (Not every day does one meet one's friends walking in a 500-page novel!) By the never-to-be-sufficiently-admired hand of chance I was standing at Joe Hogan's very elbow when he began explaining to the book clerk that

he was a friend of the Dutch sailor who had been there a few days before.

So a few days later, behold me on the Staten Island ferry, on my way to see Tommy and the *Alvina*.

I'm afraid I would always desert the office if there's a plausible excuse to bum about the waterfront. Is there any passion in the breast of mankind more absorbing than the love of ships? A tall Cunarder putting out to sea gives me a keener thrill than anything the Polo Grounds or the Metropolitan Opera can show. Of what avail a meeting of the Authors' League when one can know the sights, sounds, and smells of West or South Street? I used to lug volumes of Joseph Conrad down to the West-Street piers to give them to captains and first mates of liners, and get them to talk about the ways of the sea. That was how I met Captain Claret of the *Minnehaha*, that prince of seamen; and Mr. Pape of the *Orduña*, Mr. Jones of the *Lusitania* and many another. They knew all about Conrad, too. There were five volumes of Conrad in the officers' cabins on the *Lusitania* when she went down, God rest her. I know, because I put them there.

And the Staten Island ferry is a voyage on the Seven Seas for the landlubber. After months of office work, how one's heart leaps to greet our old

mother the sea! How drab, flat, and humdrum seem the ways of earth in comparison to the hardy and austere life of ships! There on every hand go the gallant shapes of vessels—the *James L. Morgan*, dour little tug, shoving two barges; *Themistocles*, at anchor, with the blue and white Greek colours painted on her rusty flank; the *Comanche* outward bound for Galveston (I think); the *Ascalon*, full-rigged ship, with blue-jerseyed sailormen out on her bowsprit snugging the canvas. And who is so true a lover of the sea as one who can suffer the ultimate indignities—and love her still! I am queasy as soon as I sight Sandy Hook. . . .

At the quarantine station I had a surprise. The *Alvina* was not there. One old roustabout told me he thought she had gone to sea. I was duly taken aback. Had I made the two-hour trip for nothing? Then another came to my aid. "There she is, up in the bight," he said. I followed his gesture, and saw her—a long, slim white hull, a cream-coloured funnel with a graceful rake; the Stars and Stripes fresh painted in two places on her shining side. I hailed a motor boat to take me out. The boatman wanted three dollars, and I offered one. He protested that the yacht was interned and he had no right to take visitors out anyway. He'd get into trouble with "39"—"39" being a United States destroyer lying in the Narrows a few hundred yards away. After some

bickering we compromised on a dollar and a quarter.

That was a startling adventure for the humble publisher's reader! Wallowing in an ice-glazed motor boat, in the lumpy water of a "bight"—surrounded by ships and the men who sail them—I might almost have been a hardy newspaper man. But Long Island commuters are nurtured to a tough and perilous life, and I clambered the *Alvina's* side without dropping hat, stick, or any of my pocketful of manuscripts.

Joe Hogan, the steward, was there in his white jacket. He introduced me to the cook, the bosun, the "chief," the wireless, and the "second." The first officer was too heavy with liquor to notice the arrival of a stranger. Messrs. Haig and Haig, those *Dioscuri* of seamen, had been at work. The skipper was ashore. He owns a saloon.

The *Alvina* is a lovely little vessel, 215 feet long, they told me, and about 525 tons. She is fitted with mahogany throughout; the staterooms all have brass double beds and private bathrooms attached; she has her own wireless telegraph and telephone, refrigerating apparatus, and everything to make the owner and his guests comfortable. But her beautiful furnishings were tumbled this way and that in preparation for the sterner duties that lay before her. The lower deck was cumbered with sacks of coal lashed down. A trans-

atlantic voyage in January is likely to be a lively one for a yacht of 500 tons.

I found Tommy below in his bunk, cleaning up. He is a typical Dutch lad—round, open face, fair hair, and guileless blue eyes. He showed me all his treasures—his certificates of good conduct from all the ships (both sail and steam) on which he has served; a picture of his mother, who died when he was six; and of his sister Greta—a very pretty girl—who is also mentioned in *Casuals of the Sea*. The drunken fireman in the story who dies after a debauch was Tommy's father who died in the same way. And with these other treasures Tommy showed me a packet of letters from Mr. McFee.

I do not want to offend Mr. McFee by describing his letters to this Dutch sailor-boy as "sensible," but that is just what they were. Tommy is one of his own "casuals"—

> —those frail craft upon the restless Sea
> Of Human Life, who strike the rocks uncharted,
> Who loom, sad phantoms, near us, drearily,
> Storm-driven, rudderless, with timbers started—

and these sailormen who drift from port to port on the winds of chance are most in need of sound Ben Franklin advice. Save your money; put it in the bank; read books; go to see the museums, libraries, and art galleries; get to know something about this great America if you intend to settle down there—

that is the kind of word Tommy gets from his friend.

Gradually, as I talked with him, I began to see into the laboratory of life where *Casuals of the Sea* originated. This book is valuable because it is a triumphant expression of the haphazard, strangely woven chances that govern the lives of the humble. In Tommy's honest, gentle face, and in the talk of his shipmates when we sat down to dinner together, I saw a microcosm of the strange barren life of the sea where men float about for years like driftwood. And out of all this ebbing tide of aimless, happy-go-lucky humanity McFee had chanced upon this boy from Amsterdam and had tried to pound into him some good sound common sense.

When I left her that afternoon, the *Alvina* was getting up steam, and she sailed within a few hours. I had eaten and talked with her crew, and for a short space had a glimpse of the lives and thoughts of the simple, childlike men who live on ships. I realized for the first time the truth of that background of aimless hazard that makes *Casuals of the Sea* a book of more than passing merit.

As for Tommy, the printed word had him in thrall though he knew it not. When he got back from Liverpool, two months later, I found him a job in the engine room of a big printing press. He was set to work oiling the dynamos, and at ten

dollars a week he had a fine chance to work his way up. Indeed, he enrolled in a Scranton correspondence course on steam engineering and enchanted his Hempstead landlady by his simple ways. That lasted just two weeks. The level ground made Tommy's feet uneasy. The last I heard he was on a steam yacht on Long Island Sound.

But wherever steam and tide may carry him, Tommy cherishes in his heart his own private badge of honour: his friend the engineer has put him in a book! And there, in one of the noblest and most honest novels of our day, you will find him—a casual of the sea!

THE LAST PIPE

The last smoker I recollect among those of the old school was a clergyman. He had seen the best society, and was a man of the most polished behaviour. This did not hinder him from taking his pipe every evening before he went to bed. He sat in his armchair, his back gently bending, his knees a little apart, his eyes placidly inclined toward the fire. The end of his recreation was announced by the tapping of the bowl of his pipe upon the hob, for the purpose of emptying it of its ashes. Ashes to ashes; head to bed.

—Leigh Hunt.

THE sensible man smokes (say) sixteen pipefuls a day, and all differ in value and satisfaction. In smoking there is, thank heaven, no law of diminishing returns. I may puff all day long until I nigresce with the fumes and soot, but the joy loses no savour by repetition. It is true that there is a peculiar blithe rich taste in the first morning puffs, inhaled after breakfast. (Let me posit here the ideal conditions for a morning pipe as I know them.) After your bath, breakfast must be spread in a chamber of eastern exposure; let there be hominy and cream, and if

possible, brown sugar. There follow scrambled eggs, shirred to a lemon-yellow with toast sliced in triangles, fresh, unsalted butter, and Scotch bitter marmalade. Let there be without fail a platter of hot bacon, curly, juicy, fried to the debatable point where softness is overlaid with the faintest crepitation of crackle, of crispyness. If hot Virginia corn pone is handy, so much the better. And coffee, two-thirds hot milk, also with brown sugar. It must be permissible to call for a second serving of the scrambled eggs; or, if this is beyond the budget, let there be a round of judiciously grilled kidneys, with mayhap a sprinkle of mushrooms, grown in chalky soil. That is the kind of breakfast they used to serve in Eden before the fall of man and the invention of innkeepers with their crass formulæ.

After such a breakfast, if one may descend into a garden of plain turf, mured about by an occluding wall, with an alley of lime trees for sober pacing: then and there is the fit time and place for the first pipe of the day. Pack your mixture in the bowl; press it lovingly down with the cushion of the thumb; see that the draught is free—and then for your *säckerhets tändstickor!* A day so begun is well begun, and sin will flee your precinct. Shog, vile care! The smoke is cool and blue and tasty on the tongue; the arch of the palate is receptive to the fume; the curling vapour ascends

the chimneys of the nose. Fill your cheeks with the excellent cloudy reek, blow it forth in twists and twirls. The first pipe!

But, as I was saying, joy ends not here. Granted that the after-breakfast smoke excels in savour, succeeding fumations grow in mental reaction. The first pipe is animal, physical, a matter of pure sensation. With later kindlings of the weed the brain quickens, begins to throw out tendrils of speculation, leaps to welcome problems for thought, burrows tingling into the unknowable. As the smoke drifts and shreds about your neb, your mind is surcharged with that imponderable energy of thought, which cannot be seen or measured, yet is the most potent force in existence. All the hot sunlight of Virginia that stirred the growing leaf in its odorous plantation now crackles in that glowing dottel in your briar bowl. The venomous juices of the stalk seep down the stem. The most precious things in the world are also vivid with poison.

Was Kant a smoker? I think he must have been. How else could he have written *The Critique of Pure Reason?* Tobacco is the handmaid of science, philosophy, and literature. Carlyle eased his indigestion and snappish temper by perpetual pipes. The generous use of the weed makes the enforced retirement of Sing Sing less irksome to forgers, second-story men, and fire bugs. Samuel Butler,

who had little enough truck with churchmen, was once invited to stay a week-end by the Bishop of London. Distrusting the entertaining qualities of bishops, and rightly, his first impulse was to decline. But before answering the Bishop's letter he passed it to his manservant for advice. The latter (the immortal Alfred Emery Cathie) said: "There is a crumb of tobacco in the fold of the paper, sir: I think you may safely go." He went, and hugely enjoyed himself.

There is a Bible for smokers, a book of delightful information for all acolytes of this genial ritual, crammed with wit and wisdom upon the art and mystery we cherish. It is called *The Social History of Smoking*, by G. L. Apperson. Alas, a friend of mine, John Marshall (he lives somewhere in Montreal or Quebec), borrowed it from me, and obstinately declines to return it. If he should ever see this, may his heart be loosened and relent. Dear John, I wish you would return that book.

I was contending that the joy of smoking increases harmonically with the weight of tobacco consumed, within reasonable limits. Of course the incessant smoker who is puffing all day long sears his tongue and grows callous to the true delicacy of the flavour. For that reason it is best not to smoke during office hours. This may be a hard saying to some, but a proper respect for the

art impels it. Not even the highest ecclesiast can be at his devotions always. It is not those who are horny with genuflection who are nearest the Throne of Grace. Even the Pope (I speak in all reverence) must play billiards or trip a coranto now and then.

This is the schedule I vouch for:

After breakfast: 2 pipes
At luncheon: 2 pipes
Before dinner: 2 pipes
Between dinner and bed: 10 to 12 pipes
(Cigars and cigarettes as occasion may require.)

The matter of smoking after dinner requires consideration. If your meal is a heavy, stupefying anodyne, retracting all the humane energies from the skull in a forced abdominal mobilization to quell a plethora of food into subjection and assimilation, there is no power of speculation left in the top storeys. You sink brutishly into an armchair, warm your legs at the fire, and let the leucocytes and phagocytes fight it out. At such times smoking becomes purely mechanical. You imbibe and exhale the fumes automatically. The choicest aromatic blends are mere fuel. Your eyes see, but your brain responds not. The vital juices, generous currents, or whatever they are that animate the intelligence, are down below hatches fighting furiously to annex and drill into

submission the alien and distracting mass of food that you have taken on board. They are like stevedores, stowing the cargo for portability. A little later, however, when this excellent work is accomplished, the bosun may trill his whistle, and the deck hands can be summoned back to the navigating bridge. The mind casts off its corporeal hawsers and puts out to sea. You begin once more to live as a rational composition of reason, emotion, and will. The heavy dinner postpones and stultifies this desirable state. Let it then be said that light dining is best: a little fish or cutlets, white wine, macaroni and cheese, ice cream and coffee. Such a régime restores the animal health, and puts you in vein for a continuance of intellect.

Smoking is properly an intellectual exercise. It calls forth the choicest qualities of mind and soul. It can only be properly conducted by a being in full possession of the five wits. For those who are in pain, sorrow, or grievous perplexity it operates as a sovereign consoler, a balm and balsam to the harassed spirit; it calms the fretful, makes jovial the peevish. Better than any ginseng in the herbal, does it combat fatigue and old age. Well did Stevenson exhort virgins not to marry men who do not smoke.

Now we approach the crux and pinnacle of this inquirendo into the art and mystery of smoking. That is to say, the last pipe of all before the so-

long indomitable intellect abdicates, and the body succumbs to weariness.

No man of my acquaintance has ever given me a satisfactory definition of *living*. An alternating systole and diastole, says physiology. Chlorophyl becoming xanthophyl, says botany. These stir me not. I define life as a process of the Will-to-Smoke: recurring periods of consciousness in which the enjoyability of smoking is manifest, interrupted by intervals of recuperation.

Now if I represent the course of this process by a graph (the coördinates being Time and the Sense-of-by-the-Smoker-enjoyed-Satisfaction) the curve ascends from its origin in a steep slant, then drops away abruptly at the recuperation interval. This is merely a teutonic and pedantic mode of saying that the best pipe of all is the last one smoked at night. It is the penultimate moment that is always the happiest. The sweetest pipe ever enjoyed by the skipper of the *Hesperus* was the one he whiffed just before he was tirpitzed by the poet on that angry reef.

The best smoking I ever do is about half past midnight, just before "my eyelids drop their shade," to remind you again of your primary school poets. After the toils, rebuffs, and exhilarations of the day, after piaffing busily on the lethal typewriter or *schreibmaschine* for some hours, a drowsy languor begins to numb the sense.

In dressing gown and slippers I seek my couch; Ho, Lucius, a taper! and some solid, invigorating book for consideration. My favourite is the General Catalogue of the Oxford University Press: a work so excellently full of learning; printed and bound with such eminence of skill; so noble a repository or Thesaurus of the accumulated treasures of human learning, that it sets the mind in a glow of wonder. This is the choicest garland for the brain fatigued with the insignificant and trifling tricks by which we earn our daily bread. There is no recreation so lovely as that afforded by books rich in wisdom and ribbed with ripe and sober research. This catalogue (nearly 600 pages) is a marvellous précis of the works of the human spirit. And here and there, buried in a scholarly paragraph, one meets a topical echo: "THE OXFORD SHAKESPEARE GLOSSARY: by C. T. ONIONS: Mr. Onions' glossary, offered at an insignificant price, relieves English scholarship of the necessity of recourse to the lexicon of Schmidt." Lo, how do even professors and privatdocents belabour one another!

With due care I fill, pack, and light the last pipe of the day, to be smoked reverently and solemnly in bed. The thousand brain-murdering interruptions are over. The gentle sibilance of air drawn through the glowing nest of tobacco is the only sound. With reposeful heart I turn to

some favourite entry in my well-loved catalogue.

"Henry Peacham's Compleat Gentleman. Fashioning him absolut in the most necessary and Commendable Qualities concerning Minde, or Body, that may be required in a Noble Gentleman. Whereunto is annexed a Description of the order of a Maine Battaile or Pitched Field, eight severall wayes, with the Art of Limming and other Additions newly Enlarged. Printed from the edition of 1634; first edition, 1622, with an introduction by G. S. Gordon. 1906. Pp xxiv + 16 unpaged + 262. 7s. 6d. net. *At the Clarendon Press.*"

Or this:

"H. His Devises, for his owne exercise, and his Friends pleasure. Printed from the edition of 1581, with an introduction. 1906. Pp xviii + 104. 5s net."

O excellent H! Little did he dream that his devises (with an introduction by Professor Sir Walter Raleigh) would be still giving his Friends pleasure over three hundred years later. The compiler of the catalogue says here with modest and pardonable pride "strongly bound in exceptionally tough paper and more than once described by reviewers as leather. Some of the books are here printed for the first time, the rest are reproductions of the original editions, many having prefaces by good hands."

One o'clock is about to chime in the near-by

steeple, but my pipe and curiosity are now both going strong.

"THE CURES OF THE DISEASED in remote Regions, preventing Mortalitie incident in Forraine Attempts of the English Nation. 1598. The earliest English treatise on tropical diseases. 1915. 1s. 6d. net."

Is that not the most interesting comment on the English colonial enterprises in Elizabeth's reign? And there is no limit to the joys of this marvellous catalogue. How one dreams of the unknown delights of "Two Fifteenth-Century Cookery Books," or "Dan Michel's Ayenbite of Inwyt, 1340" (which means, as I figure it, the "Backbite of Conscience"), or "Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt sive Veterum Interpretum Graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum Fragmenta, edidit F. Field. 1865. Two volumes £6 6s. net" or "Shuckford's Sacred and Profane History of the World, from the Creation of the World to the Dissolution of the Assyrian Empire at the death of Sardanapalus, and to the Declension of The Kingdom of Judah and Israel under the Reigns of Ahaz and Pekah, with the Creation and Fall of Man. 1728, reprinted 1848. Pp 500. 10s. net."

But I dare not force my hobbies on you further. One man's meat is another's caviar. I dare not even tell you what my favourite tobaccos are, for recently when I sold to a magazine a very worthy

and excellent poem entitled "My Pipe," mentioning the brands I delight to honour, the editor made me substitute fictitious names for my dearly loved blends. He said that sound editorial policy forbids mentioning commercial products in the text of the magazine.

But tobacco, thank heaven, is not merely a "commercial product." Let us call on Salvation Yeo for his immortal testimony:

"When all things were made none was made better than this; to be a lone man's companion, a bachelor's friend, a hungry man's food, a sad man's cordial, a wakeful man's sleep, and a chilly man's fire, sir; while for stanching of wounds, purging of rheum, and settling of the stomach, there's no herb like unto it under the canopy of heaven."

And by this time the bowl is naught but ash. Even my dear General Catalogue begins to blur before me. Slip it under the pillow; gently and kindly lay the pipe in the candlestick, and blow out the flame. The window is open wide: the night rushes in. I see a glimpse of stars . . . a distant chime . . . and fall asleep with the faint pungence of the Indian herb about me.

TIME TO LIGHT THE FURNACE

THE twenty-eighth of October. Coal nine dollars a ton. Mr. and Mrs. Blackwell had made a resolution not to start the furnace until Thanksgiving. And in the biting winds of Long Island that requires courage.

Commuters the world over are a hardy, valorous race. The Arab commutes by dromedary, the Malay by raft, the Indian rajah by elephant, the African chief gets a team of his mothers-in-law to tow him to the office. But wherever you find him, the commuter is a tough and tempered soul, inured to privation and calamity. At seven-thirty in the morning he leaves his bungalow, tent, hut, palace, or kraal, and tells his wife he is going to work.

How the winds whistle and moan over those Long Island flats! Mr. and Mrs. Blackwell had laid in fifteen tons of black diamonds. And hoping that would be enough, they were zealous not to start the furnace until the last touchdown had been made.

But every problem has more than one aspect.

Belinda, the new cook, had begun to work for them on the fifth of October. Belinda came from the West Indies, a brown maiden still unspoiled by the sophistries of the employment agencies. She could boil an egg without cracking it, she could open a tin can without maiming herself. She was neat, guileless, and cheerful. But, she was accustomed to a warm climate.

The twenty-eighth of October. As Mr. and Mrs. Blackwell sat at dinner, Mr. Blackwell buttoned his coat, and began a remark about how chilly the evenings were growing. But across the table came one of those glances familiar to indiscreet husbands. Passion-distorted, vibrant with rebuke, charged with the lightning of instant dissolution, Mrs. Blackwell's gaze struck him dumb with alarm. Husbands, husbands, you know that gaze!

Mr. Blackwell kept silence. He ate heartily, choosing foods rich in calories. He talked of other matters, and accepted thankfully what Belinda brought to him. But he was chilly, and a vision of coal bills danced in his mind.

After dinner he lit the open fire in the living room, and he and Mrs. Blackwell talked in discreet tones. Belinda was merrily engaged in washing the dishes.

"Bob, you consummate blockhead!" said Mrs. Blackwell, "haven't you better sense than to

talk about its being chilly? These last few days Belinda has done nothing but complain about the cold. She comes from Barbados, where the thermometer never goes below sixty. She said she couldn't sleep last night, her room was so cold. I've given her my old fur coat and the steamer rug from your den. One other remark like that of yours and she'll leave. For heaven's sake, Bob, use your skull!"

Mr. Blackwell gazed at her in concern. The deep, calculating wisdom of women was made plain to him. He ventured no reply.

Mrs. Blackwell was somewhat softened by his docility.

"You don't realize, dear," she added, "how servants are affected by chance remarks they overhear. The other day you mentioned the thermometer, and the next morning I found Belinda looking at it. If you must say anything about the temperature, complain of the heat. Otherwise we'll have to start the furnace at once."

Mr. Blackwell's face was full of the admiration common to the simple-minded race of husbands.

"Jumbo," he said, "you're right. I was crazy. Watch me from now on. Mental suggestion is the dope. The power of the chance remark!"

The next evening at dinner, while Belinda was passing the soup, Mr. Blackwell fired his first gun. "It seems almost too warm for hot soup," he said.

"All the men at the office were talking about the unseasonable hot weather. I think we'd better have a window open." To Mrs. Blackwell's dismay, he raised one of the dining-room windows, admitting a pungent frostiness of October evening. But she was game, and presently called for a palm-leaf fan. When Belinda was in the room they talked pointedly of the heat, and Mr. Blackwell quoted imaginary Weather Bureau notes from the evening paper.

After dinner, as he was about to light the log fire, from force of habit, Mrs. Blackwell snatched the burning match from him just as he was setting it to the kindling. They grinned at each other wistfully, for the ruddy evening blaze was their chief delight. Mr. Blackwell manfully took off his coat and waistcoat and sat in his shirt-sleeves until Belinda had gone to bed. Then he grew reckless and lit a roaring fire, by which they huddled in glee. He rebuilt the fire before retiring, so that Belinda might suspect nothing in the morning.

The next evening Mr. Blackwell appeared at dinner in a Palm Beach suit. Mrs. Blackwell countered by ordering iced tea. They both sneezed vigorously during the meal. "It was so warm in town to-day, I think I caught a cold," said Mr. Blackwell.

Later Mrs. Blackwell found Belinda examining

the thermometer with a puzzled air. That night they took it down and hid it in the attic. But the great stroke of the day was revealed when Mrs. Blackwell explained that Mr. and Mrs. Chester, next door, had promised to carry on a similar psychological campaign. Belinda and Mrs. Chester's cook, Tulip—jocularly known as the Black Tulip—were friends, and would undoubtedly compare notes. Mrs. Chester had agreed not to start her furnace without consultation with Mrs. Blackwell.

October yielded to November. By good fortune the weather remained sunny, but the nights were crisp. Belinda was given an oil-stove for her attic bedroom. Mrs. Blackwell heard no more complaints of the cold, but sometimes she and her husband could hear uneasy creakings upstairs late at night. "I wonder if Barbados really is so warm?" she asked Bob. "I'm sure it can't be warmer than Belinda's room. She never opens the windows, and the oil-stove has to be filled every morning."

"Perhaps some day we can get an Eskimo maid," suggested Mr. Blackwell drowsily. He wore his Palm Beach suit every night for dinner, but underneath it he was panoplied in heavy flannels.

Through Mr. Chester the rumour of the Blackwells' experiment in psychology spread far among

suburban husbands. On the morning train less fortunate commuters, who had already started their fires, referred to him as "the little brother of the iceberg." Mr. and Mrs. Chester came to dinner on the 16th of November. Both the men loudly clamoured for permission to remove their coats, and sat with blanched and chattering jaws. Mr. Blackwell made a feeble pretence at mopping his brow, but when the dessert proved to be ice-cream his nerve forsook him. "N-no, Belinda," he said. "It's too warm for ice-cream to-night. I don't w—want to get chilled. Bring me some hot coffee." As she brought his cup he noticed that her honest brown brow was beaded with perspiration. "By George," he thought, "this mental suggestion business certainly works." Late that evening he lit the log fire and revelled by the blaze in an ulster.

The next evening when Mr. Blackwell came home from business he met the doctor in the hall.

"Hello, doc," he said, "what's up?"

"Mrs. Blackwell called me in to see your maid," said the doctor. "It's the queerest thing I've met in twenty years' practice. Here it is the 17th of November, and cold enough for snow. That girl has all the symptoms of sunstroke and prickly heat."

A POET OF SAD VIGILS

THERE are many ways of sitting down to an evening vigil. Unquestionably the pleasantest is to fortify the soul with a pot of tea, plenty of tobacco, and a few chapters of Jane Austen. And if the adorable Miss Austen is not to hand, my second choice perhaps would be the literary remains of a sad, poor, and forgotten young man who was a contemporary of hers.

I say "forgotten," and I think it is just; save for his beautiful hymn "The Star of Bethlehem," who nowadays ever hears of Henry Kirke White? But on the drawing-room tables of our grandmothers' girlhood the plump volume, edited with a fulsome memoir by Southey, held honourable place near the conch shell from the Pacific and the souvenirs of the Crystal Palace. Mr. Southey, in his thirty years' laureateship, made the fame of several young versifiers, and deemed that in introducing poor White's remains to the polite world he was laying the first lucifer to a bonfire that would gloriously crackle for posterity. No less than Chatterton was the worthy laureate's

estimate of his young foundling; but alas! Chatterton and Kirke White both seem thinnish gruel to us; and even Southey himself is down among the pinch hitters. Literary prognosis is a parlous sport.

The generation that gave us Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge, Lamb, Jane Austen, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Byron, Shelley, and Keats, leaves us little time for Kirke White considered purely as a literary man. His verses are grotesquely stilted, the obvious conjunction of biliousness and overstudy, and adapted to the taste of an era when the word female was still used as a substantive. But they are highly entertaining to read because they so faithfully mirror the backwash of romanticism. They are so thoroughly unhealthy, so morbid, so pallid with moonlight, so indentured by the ayenbite of inwit, that it is hard to believe that Henry's father was a butcher and should presumably have reared him on plenty of sound beefsteak and blood gravy. If only Miss Julia Lathrop or Dr. Anna Howard Shaw could have been Henry's mother, he might have lived to write poems on the abolition of slavery in America. But as a matter of fact, he was done to death by the brutal tutors of St. John's College, Cambridge, and perished at the age of twenty-one, in 1806. As a poet, let him pass; but the story of his life breathes a sweet and honourable fragrance, and is

comely to ponder in the midnight hours. As Southey said, there is nothing to be recorded but what is honourable to him; nothing to be regretted but that one so ripe for heaven should so soon have been removed from the world.

He was born in Nottingham, March 21, 1785, of honest tradesman parents; his origin reminds one inevitably of that of Keats. From his earliest years he was studious in temper, and could with difficulty be drawn from his books, even at meal-times. At the age of seven he wrote a story of a Swiss emigrant and gave it to the servant, being too bashful to show it to his mother. Southey's comment on this is "The consciousness of genius is always accompanied with this diffidence; it is a sacred, solitary feeling."

His schooling was not long; and while it lasted part of Henry's time was employed in carrying his father's deliveries of chops and rumps to the prosperous of Nottingham. At fourteen his parents made an effort to start him in line for business by placing him in a stocking factory. The work was wholly uncongenial, and shortly afterward he was employed in the office of a busy firm of lawyers. He spent twelve hours a day in the office and then an hour more in the evening was put upon Latin and Greek. Even such recreation hours as the miserable youth found were dismally employed in declining nouns and conjugating

verbs. In a little garret at the top of the house he began to collect his books; even his supper of bread and milk was carried up to him there, for he refused to eat with his family for fear of interrupting his studies. It is a deplorable picture: the fumes of the hearty butcher's evening meal ascend the stair in vain, Henry is reading Blackstone and *The Wealth of Nations*. If it were Udolpho or Conan Doyle that held him, there were some excuse. The sad life of Henry is the truest indictment of overstudy that I know. No one, after reading Southey's memoir, will overload his brain again.

At the age of fifteen we find the boy writing to his older brother Neville: "I have made a firm resolution never to spend above one hour at this amusement [novel reading]. I have been obliged to enter into this resolution in consequence of a vitiated taste acquired by reading romances." He is human enough to add, however, that "after long and fatiguing researches in Blackstone or Coke, *Tom Jones* or *Robinson Crusoe* afford a pleasing and necessary relaxation. Of *Robinson Crusoe* I shall observe that it is allowed to be the best novel for youth in the English language."

The older brother to whom these comments were addressed was living in London, apparently a fairly successful man of business. Henry permitted himself to indulge his pedagogical and ministerial instincts for the benefit and improvement of

his kinsman. They seem to have carried on a mutual recrimination in their letters: Neville was inclined to belittle the divine calling of poets in their teens; while Henry deplored his brother's unwillingness to write at length and upon serious and "instructive" topics. Alas, the ill-starred young man had a mania for self-improvement. If our great-grandparents were all like that what an age it had been for the Scranton correspondence courses! "What is requisite to make one's correspondence valuable?" asks Henry. "I answer, *sound sense*." (The italics are his own.) "You have better natural abilities than many youth," he tells his light-hearted brother, "but it is with regret I see that you will not give yourself the trouble of writing a good letter. My friend, you never found any art, however trivial, that did not require some application at first." He begs the astounded Neville to fill his letters with his opinions of the books he reads. "You have no idea how beneficial this would be to yourself." Does one not know immediately that Henry is destined to an early grave?

Henry's native sweetness was further impaired by a number of prizes won in magazine competitions. A silver medal and a pair of twelve-inch globes shortly became his for meritorious contributions to the *Monthly Mirror*. He was also admitted a member of a famous literary society then exist-

ing in Nottingham, and although the youngest of the sodality he promptly announced that he proposed to deliver them a lecture. With mingled curiosity and dismay the gathering assembled at the appointed time, and the inspired youth harangued them for two hours on the subject of Genius. The devil, or his agent in Nottingham, had marked Henry for destruction.

In such a career there can be no doubt as to the next step. He published a book of poems. His verses, dealing with such topics as Consumption, Despair, Lullaby of a Female Convict to Her Child the Night Previous to Execution, Lines Spoken by a Lover at the Grave of His Mistress, The Eve of Death, and Sonnet Addressed by a Female Lunatic to a Lady, had been warmly welcomed by the politest magazines of the time. To wish to publish them in more permanent form was natural; but the unfortunate young man conceived the thought that the venture might even be a profitable one. He had found himself troubled with deafness, which threatened to annul his industry in the law; moreover, his spirit was canting seriously toward devotional matters, and thoughts of a college career and then the church were lively in his mind.

The winter of 1802–03 was busily passed in preparing his manuscript for the printer. Probably never before or since, until the Rev. John Franklin

Bair of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, set about garnering his collected works into that volume which is the delight of the wicked, has a human heart mulled over indifferent verses with so honest a pleasure and such unabated certainty of immortality. The first two details to be attended to were the printing of what were modestly termed *Proposals*—i. e., advertisements of the projected volume, calling for pledges of subscription—and, still more important, securing the permission of some prominent person to accept a dedication of the book. The jolly old days of literary patronage were then in the sere and saffron, but it was still esteemed an aid to the sale of a volume if it might be dedicated to some marquis of Carabas. Accordingly the manuscript was despatched to London, and Neville, the philistine brother, was called upon to leave it at the residence of the Duchess of Devonshire. A very humble letter from honest Henry accompanied it, begging leave of her Grace to dedicate his "trifling effusions" to her.

Henry's letters to Neville while his book was in preparation are very entertaining, as those of minor poets always are under such circumstances. Henry was convinced that at least 350 copies would be sold in Nottingham. He writes in exultation that he has already got twenty-three orders even before his "proposals" are ready:

"I have got twenty-three, without making the

affair public at all, among my immediate acquaintance: and mind, I neither solicit nor draw the conversation to the subject, but a rumour has got abroad, and has been received more favourably than I expected."

But the matter of the dedication unfortunately lagged far behind the poet's hopes. After the manuscript was left at the house of her Grace of Devonshire there followed what the Ancient Mariner so feelingly calls a weary time. Poor Henry in Nottingham hung upon the postman's heels, but no word arrived from the duchess. She was known to be assaulted from all sides by such applications: indeed her mail seems to have been very nearly as large as that of Mary Pickford or Theda Bara. Then, to his unspeakable anxiety, the miserable and fermenting Henry learned that all parcels sent to the duchess, unless marked with a password known only to her particular correspondents, were thrown into a closet by her porter to be reclaimed at convenience, or not at all. "I am ruined," cried Henry in agony; and the worthy Neville paid several unsuccessful visits to Devonshire House in the attempt to retrieve the manuscript. Finally, after waiting four hours in the servants' hall, he succeeded. Even then undaunted, this long-suffering older brother made one more try in the poet's behalf: he obtained a letter of introduction to the duchess, and called

on her in person, wisely leaving the manuscript at home; and with the complaisance of the great the lady readily acquiesced in Henry's modest request. Her name was duly inscribed on the proper page of the little volume, and in course of time the customary morocco bound copy reached her. Alas, she took no notice of it, and Mr. Southey surmises that "Involved as she was in an endless round of miserable follies, it is probable that she never opened the book."

Clifton Grove was the title Henry gave the book, published in 1803.

It is not necessary to take the poems in this little volume more seriously than any seventeen-year-old ejaculations. It is easy to see what Henry's reading had been—Milton, Collins, and Gray, evidently. His unconscious borrowings from Milton do him great credit, as showing how thoroughly he appreciated good poetry. It seeped into his mind and became part of his own outpourings. *Il Penseroso* gushes to the surface of poor Henry's song every few lines; precious twigs and shreds of Milton flow merrily down the current of his thought. And yet smile as we may, every now and then friend Henry puts something over. One of his poems is a curious foretaste of what Keats was doing ten years later. Every now and then one pauses to think that this lad, once his youthful vapours were over, might have done

great things. And as he says in his quaint little preface, "the unpremeditated effusions of a boy, from his thirteenth year, employed, not in the acquisition of literary information, but in the more active business of life, must not be expected to exhibit any considerable portion of the correctness of a Virgil, or the vigorous compression of a Horace."

The publishing game was new to Henry, and the slings and arrows found an unshielded heart. When the first copies of his poor little book came home from the printer he was prostrated to find several misprints. He nearly swooned, but seizing a pen he carefully corrected all the copies. After writing earnest and very polite letters to all the reviewers he despatched copies to the leading periodicals, and sat down in the sure hope of rapid fame. How bitter was his chagrin when the *Monthly Review* for February, 1804, came out with a rather disparaging comment: in particular the critic took umbrage at his having put *boy* to rhyme with *sky*, and added, referring to Henry's hopes of a college course, "If Mr. White should be instructed by alma mater, he will, doubtless, produce better sense and better rhymes."

The review was by no means unjust: it said what any disinterested opinion must have confirmed, that the youth's ambitions were excellent, but that neither he, nor indeed any two-footed

singer, is likely to be an immortal poet by seventeen. But Henry's sensitive soul had been so inflated by the honest pride of his friends that he could only see gross and callous malignity and conspiracy in the criticism. His theology, his health, his peace of mind, were all overthrown. As a matter of fact, however (as Southey remarks), it was the very brusqueness of this review that laid the foundation of his reputation. The circumstance aroused Southey's interest in the young man's efforts to raise himself above his level in the world and it was the laureate who after Henry's death edited his letters and literary remains, and gave him to us as we have him. Southey tells us that after the young man's death he and Coleridge looked over his papers with great emotion, and were amazed at the fervour of his industry and ambition.

Alas, we must hurry the narrative, on which one would gladly linger. The life of this sad and high-minded anchorite has a strong fascination for me. Melancholy had marked him for her own: he himself always felt that he had not a long span before him. Hindered by deafness, threatened with consumption, and a deadlier enemy yet—epilepsy—his frail and uneasy spirit had full right to distrust its tenement. The summer of 1804 he spent partly at Wilford, a little village near Nottingham where he took lodgings. His

employers very kindly gave him a generous holiday to recruit; but his old habits of excessive study seized him again. He had, for the time, given up hope of being able to attend the university, and accordingly thought it all the more necessary to do well at the law. Night after night he would read till two or three in the morning, lie down fully dressed on his bed, and rise again to work at five or six. His mother, who was living with him in his retreat, used to go upstairs to put out his candle and see that he went to bed; but Henry, so docile in other matters, in this was unconquerable. When he heard his mother's step on the stair he would extinguish the taper and feign sleep; but after she had retired he would light it again and resume his reading. Perhaps the best things he wrote were composed in this period of extreme depression. The "Ode on Disappointment," and some of his sonnets, breathe a quiet dignity of resignation to sorrow that is very touching and even worthy of respect as poetry. He never escaped the cliché and the bathetic, but this is a fair example of his midnight musings at their highest pitch:

TO CONSUMPTION

Gently, most gently, on thy victim's head,
Consumption, lay thine hand. Let me decay,
Like the expiring lamp, unseen, away,
And softly go to slumber with the dead.

And if 'tis true what holy men have said,
That strains angelic oft foretell the day
Of death, to those good men who fall thy prey,
O let the aerial music round my bed,
Dissolving sad in dying symphony,
Whisper the solemn warning in mine ear;
That I may bid my weeping friends good-bye,
Ere I depart upon my journey drear:
And smiling faintly on the painful past,
Compose my decent head, and breathe my last.

But in spite of depression and ill health, he was really happy at Wilford, a village in the elbow of a deep gully on the Trent, and near his well-beloved Clifton Woods. On the banks of the stream he would sit for hours in a maze of dreams, or wander among the trees on summer nights, awed by the sublime beauty of the lightning, and heedless of drenched and muddy clothes.

Later in the summer it was determined that he should go to college after all; and by the generosity of a number of friends (including Neville who promised twenty pounds annually) he was able to enter himself for St. John's College, Cambridge. In the autumn he left his legal employers, who were very sorry to lose him, and took up quarters with a clergyman in Lincolnshire (Winteringham) under whom he pursued his studies for a year, to prepare himself thoroughly for college. His letters during this period are mostly of a religious tinge,

enlivened only by a mishap while boating on the Humber when he was stranded for six hours on a sand-bank. He had become quite convinced that his calling was the ministry. The proper observance of the Sabbath by his younger brothers and sisters weighed on his mind, and he frequently wrote home on this topic.

In October, 1805, we find him settled at last in his rooms at St. John's, the college that is always dear to us as the academic home of two very different undergraduates—William Wordsworth and Samuel Butler. His rooms were in the rearmost court, near the cloisters, and overlooking the famous Bridge of Sighs. His letters give us a pleasant picture of his quiet rambles through the town, his solitary cups of tea as he sat by the fire, and his disappointment in not being able to hear his lecturers on account of his deafness. Most entertaining to any one at all familiar with the life of the Oxford and Cambridge colleges is his account of the thievery of his "gyp" (the manservant who makes the bed, cares for the rooms, and attends to the wants of the students). Poor Henry's tea, sugar, and handkerchiefs began to vanish in the traditional way; but he was practical enough to buy a large padlock for his coal bin.

But Henry's innocent satisfaction in having at last attained the haven of his desires was not long of duration. In spite of ill health, his tutors

constrained him to enter for a scholarship examination in December, and when the unfortunate fellow pleaded physical inability, they dosed him with "strong medicines" to enable him to face the examiners. After the ordeal he was so unstrung that he hurried off to London to spend Christmas with his aunt.

The account of his year at college is very pitiful. His tutors were, according to their lights, very kind; they relieved him as far as possible from financial worries, but they did not have sense enough to restrain him from incessant study. Even on his rambles he was always at work memorizing Greek plays, mathematical theorems, or what not. In a memorandum found in his desk his life was thus planned: "Rise at half-past five. Devotions and walk till seven. Chapel and breakfast till eight. Study and lectures till one. Four and a half clear reading. Walk and dinner, and chapel to six. Six to nine reading. Nine to ten, devotions. Bed at ten."

In the summer of 1806 his examiners ranked him the best man of his year, and in mistaken kindness the college decided to grant him the unusual compliment of keeping him in college through the vacation with a special mathematical tutor, gratis, to work with him, mathematics being considered his weakness. As his only chance of health lay in complete rest during the holiday, this plan of

spending the summer in study was simply a death sentence. In July, while at work on logarithm tables, he was overtaken by a sudden fainting fit, evidently of an epileptic nature. The malady gained strength, aided by the weakness of his heart and lungs, and he died on October 19, 1806.

Poor Henry! Surely no gentler, more innocent soul ever lived. His letters are a golden treasury of earnest and solemn speculation. Perhaps once a twelvemonth he displays a sad little vein of pleasantry, but not for long. Probably the light-hearted undergraduates about him found him a very prosy, shabby, and mournful young man, but if one may judge by the outburst of tributary verses published after his death he was universally admired and respected. Let us close the story by a quotation from a tribute paid him by a lady versifier:

> If worth, if genius, to the world are dear,
> To Henry's shade devote no common tear.
> His worth on no precarious tenure hung,
> From genuine piety his virtues sprung:
> If pure benevolence, if steady sense,
> Can to the feeling heart delight dispense;
> If all the highest efforts of the mind,
> Exalted, noble, elegant, refined,
> Call for fond sympathy's heartfelt regret,
> Ye sons of genius, pay the mournful debt!

TRIVIA

The secret thoughts of a man run over all things, holy, profane, clean, obscene, grave, and light, without shame or blame.
—HOBBES, *Leviathan*, Chap. VIII.

THE bachelor is almost extinct in America. Our hopelessly utilitarian civilization demands that a man of forty should be rearing a family, should go to an office five times a week, and pretend an interest in the World's Series. It is unthinkable to us that there should be men of mature years who do not know the relative batting averages of the Red Sox and the Pirates. The intellectual and strolling male of from thirty-five to fifty-five years (which is what one means by bachelor) must either marry and settle down in the Oranges, or he must flee to Europe or the MacDowell Colony. There is no alternative. Vachel Lindsay please notice.

The fate of Henry James is a case in point. Undoubtedly he fled the shores of his native land to escape the barrage of the bonbonniverous sub-deb, who would else have mown him down without ruth.

But in England they still linger, these quaint, phosphorescent middle aged creatures, lurking behind a screenage of muffins and crumpets and hip baths. And thither fled one of the most delightful born bachelors this hemisphere has ever unearthed, Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith.

Mr. Smith was a Philadelphian, born about fifty years ago. But that most amiable of cities does not encourage detached and meditative bachelorhood, and after sampling what is quaintly known as "a guarded education in morals and manners" at Haverford College, our hero passed to Harvard, and thence by a swifter decline to Oxford. Literature and liberalism became his pursuits; on the one hand, he found himself engrossed in the task of proving to the British electorate that England need not always remain the same; on the other, he wrote a Life of Sir Henry Wotton, a volume of very graceful and beautiful short stories about Oxford (*The Youth of Parnassus*) and a valuable little book on the history and habits of the English language.

But in spite of his best endeavours to quench and subdue his mental humours, Mr. Smith found his serious moments invaded by incomprehensible twinges of esprit. Travelling about England, leading the life of the typical English bachelor, equipped with gladstone bag, shaving kit, evening clothes and tweeds; passing from country

house to London club, from Oxford common room to Sussex gardens, the solemn pageantry of the cultivated classes now and then burst upon him in its truly comic aspect. The tinder and steel of his wit, too uncontrollably frictioned, ignited a shower of roman candles, and we conceive him prostrated with irreverent laughter in some lonely railway carriage.

Mr. Smith did his best to take life seriously, and I believe he succeeded passably well until after forty years of age. But then the spectacle of the English vicar toppled him over, and once the gravity of the Church of England is invaded, all lesser Alps and sanctuaries lie open to the scourge. Menaced by serious intellectual disorders unless he were to give vent to these disturbing levities, Mr. Smith began to set them down under the title of *Trivia*, and now at length we are enriched by the spectacle of this iridescent and puckish little book, which presents as it were a series of lantern slides of an ironical, whimsical, and merciless sense of humour. It is a motion picture of a middle-aged, phosphorescent mind that has long tried to preserve a decent melancholy but at last capitulates in the most delicately intellectual brainslide of our generation.

This is no Ring Lardner, no Irvin Cobb, no Casey at the bat. Mr. Smith is an infinitely close and acute observer of sophisticated social life,

tinged with a faint and agreeable refined sadness, by an aura of shyness which amounts to a spiritual virginity. He comes to us trailing clouds of glory from the heaven of pure and unfettered speculation which is our home. He is an elf of utter simplicity and infinite candour. He is a flicker of absolute Mind. His little book is as precious and as disturbing as devilled crabs.

Blessèd, blessèd little book, how you will run like quicksilver from mind to mind, leaping—a shy and shining spark—from brain to brain! I know of nothing since Lord Bacon quite like these ineffably dainty little paragraphs of gilded whim, these rainbow nuggets of wistful inquiry, these butterfly wings of fancy, these pointed sparklers of wit. A purge, by Zeus, a purge for the wicked! Irony so demure, so quaint, so far away; pathos so void of regret, merriment so delicate that one dare not laugh for fear of dispelling the charm—all this is *Trivia*. Where are Marcus Aurelius or Epictetus or all the other Doctor Frank Cranes of old time? Baron Verulam himself treads a heavy gait beside this airy elfin scamper. It is Atalanta's heels. It is a heaven-given scenario of that shyest, dearest, remotest of essences—the mind of a strolling bachelor.

Bless his heart, in a momentary panic of modesty at the thought of all his sacred spots laid bare, the heavenly man tries to scare us away. "These

pieces of moral prose have been written, dear Reader, by a large, Carnivorous Mammal, belonging to that suborder of the Animal Kingdom, which includes also the Orang-outang, the tusked Gorilla, the Baboon, with his bright blue and scarlet bottom, and the gentle Chimpanzee."

But this whimsical brother to the chimpanzee, despite this last despairing attempt at modest evasion, denudes himself before us. And his heart, we find, is strangely like our own. His reveries, his sadnesses, his exhilarations, are all ours, too. Like us he cries, "I wish I were unflinching and emphatic, and had big bushy eyebrows and a Message for the Age. I wish I were a deep Thinker, or a great Ventriloquist." Like us he has that dreadful feeling (now and then) of being only a ghost, a thin, unreal phantom in a world of bank cashiers and duchesses and prosperous merchants and other Real Persons. Like us he fights a losing battle against the platitudes and moral generalizations that hem us round. "I can hardly post a letter," he laments, "without marvelling at the excellence and accuracy of the Postal System." And he consoles himself, good man, with the thought of the meaningless creation crashing blindly through frozen space. His other great consolation is his dear vice of reading—"This joy not dulled by Age, this polite and unpunished vice, this selfish, serene, life-long intoxication."

It is impossible by a few random snippets to give any just figment of the delicious mental intoxication of this piercing, cathartic little volume. It is a bright tissue of thought robing a radiant, dancing spirit. Through the shimmering veil of words we catch, now and then, a flashing glimpse of the idiosyncrasy within, shy, sudden, and defiant. Across blue bird-haunted English lawns we follow that gracious figure, down dusky London streets where he is peering in at windows and laughing incommunicable jests.

But alas, Mr. Pearsall Smith is lost to America. The warming pans and the twopenny tube have lured him away from us. Never again will he tread on peanut shells in the smoking car or read the runes about Phoebe Snow. Chiclets and Spearmint and Walt Mason and the Toonerville Trolley and the Prince Albert ads—these mean nothing to him. He will never compile an anthology of New York theatrical notices: "The play that makes the dimples to catch the tears." Careful and adroit propaganda, begun twenty years ago by the Department of State, might have won him back, but now it is impossible to repatriate him. The exquisite humours of our American life are faded from his mind. He has gone across the great divide that separates a subway from an underground and an elevator from a lift. I wonder does

he ever mourn the scrapple and buckwheat cakes that were his birthright?

Major George Haven Putnam in his *Memories of a Publisher* describes a famous tennis match played at Oxford years ago, when he and Pearsall Smith defeated A. L. Smith and Herbert Fisher, the two gentlemen who are now Master of Balliol and British Minister of Education. The Balliol don attributed the British defeat in this international tourney to the fact that his tennis shoes (shall we say his "sneakers"?) came to grief and he had to play the crucial games in stocking feet. But though Major Putnam and his young ally won the set of *patters* (let us use the Wykehamist word), the Major allowed the other side to gain a far more serious victory. They carried off the young Philadelphian and kept him in England until he was spoiled for all good American uses. That was badly done, Major! Because we needed Pearsall Smith over here, and now we shall never recapture him. He will go on calling an elevator a lift, and he will never write an American *Trivia*.

A FRIEND OF FITZGERALD

Loder is a Rock of Ages to rely on.
—Edward FitzGerald.

I HEARD the other day of the death of dear old John Loder, the Woodbridge bookseller, at the age of ninety-two. Though ill equipped to do justice to his memory, it seems to me a duty, and a duty that I take up gladly. It is not often that a young man has the good fortune to know as a friend one who has been a crony of his own grandfather and great-grandfather. Such was my privilege in the case of John Loder, a man whose life was all sturdy simplicity and generous friendship. He shines in no merely reflected light, but in his own native nobility. I think there are a few lovers of England and of books who will be glad not to forget his unobtrusive services to literature. If only John Loder had kept a journal it would be one of the minor treasures of the Victorian Age. He had a racy, original turn of speech, full of the Suffolk lingo that so delighted his friend FitzGerald; full, too, of the delicacies of rich thought and feeling. He used to lament in his later years

that he had not kept a diary as a young man. Alas that his Boswell came too late to do more than snatch at a few of his memories.

There is a little Suffolk town on the salt tide-water of the Deben, some ten miles from the sea. Its roofs of warm red tile are clustered on the hill-slopes that run down toward the river; a massive, gray church tower and a great windmill are conspicuous landmarks. Broad barges and shabby schooners, with ruddy and amber sails, lie at anchor or drop down the river with the tide, bearing the simple sailormen of Mr. W. W. Jacobs's stories. In the old days before the railway it was a considerable port and a town of thriving commerce. But now—well, it is little heard of in the annals of the world.

Yet Woodbridge, unknown to the tourist, has had her pilgrims, too, and her nook in literature. It was there that George Crabbe of Aldeburgh was apprenticed to a local surgeon and wrote his first poem, unhappily entitled "Inebriety." There lived Bernard Barton, "the Quaker poet," a versifier of a very mild sort, but immortal by reason of his friendships with greater men. Addressed to Bernard Barton, in a plain, neat hand, came scores of letters to Woodbridge in the eighteen-twenties, letters now famous, which found their way up Church Street to Alexander's Bank. They were from no less a man than Charles

Lamb. Also I have always thought it very much to Woodbridge's credit that a certain Woodbridgian named Pulham was a fellow-clerk of Lamb's at the East India House. Perhaps Mr. Pulham introduced Lamb and Barton to each other. And as birthplace and home of Edward FitzGerald, Woodbridge drew such visitors as Carlyle and Tennyson, who came to seek out the immortal recluse. In the years following FitzGerald's death many a student of books, some all the way from America, found his way into John Loder's shop to gossip about "Old Fitz." In 1893 a few devoted members of the Omar Khayyam Club of London pilgrimaged to Woodbridge to plant by the grave at Boulge (please pronounce "Bowidge") a rosetree that had been raised from seed brought from the bush that sheds its petals over the dust of the tent-maker at Naishapur. In 1909 Woodbridge and Ipswich celebrated the FitzGerald centennial.

Some day, if you are wise, you too will take a train at Liverpool Street, and drawn by one of those delightful blue locomotives of the Great Eastern Railway speed through Colchester and Ipswich and finally set foot on the platform at Woodbridge. As you step from the stuffy compartment the keen salt Deben air will tingle in your nostrils; and you may discover in it a faint under-whiff of strong tobacco—the undying

scent of pipes smoked on the river wall by old Fitz, and in recent years by John Loder himself. If you have your bicycle with you, or are content to hire one, you will find that rolling Suffolk country the most delightful in the world for quiet spinning. (But carry a repair kit, for there are many flints!) Ipswich itself is full of memories—of Chaucer, and Wolsey, and Dickens (it is the "Eatanswill" of Pickwick), and it is much pleasure to one of Suffolk blood to recall that James Harper, the grandfather of the four brothers who founded the great publishing house of Harper and Brothers a century ago, was an Ipswich man, born there in 1740. You will bike to Bury St. Edmunds (where Fitz went to school, and our beloved William McFee also) and Aldeburgh, and Dunwich, to hear the chimes of the sea-drowned abbey ringing under the waves. If you are a Stevensonian, you will hunt out Cockfield Rectory, near Sudbury, where R. L. S. first met Sidney Colvin in 1872. (Colvin himself came from Bealings, only two miles from Woodbridge.) You may ride to Dunmow in Essex, to see the country of Mr. Britling; and to Wigborough, near Colchester, the haunt of Mr. McFee's painter-cousin in *Aliens*. You will hire a sailboat at Lime Kiln Quay or the Jetty and bide a moving air and a going tide to drop down to Bawdsey ferry to hunt shark's teeth and amber among the shingle. You will pace the

river walk to Kyson—perhaps the tide will be out and sunset tints shimmer over those glossy stretches of mud. Brown seaweed, vivid green samphire, purple flats of slime where the river ran a few hours before, a steel-gray trickle of water in the scour of the channel and a group of stately swans ruffling there; and the huddled red roofs of the town with the stately church tower and the waving arms of the windmill looking down from the hill. It is a scene to ravish an artist. You may walk back by way of Martlesham Heath, stopping at the Red Lion for a quencher (the Red Lion figurehead is supposed to have come from one of the ships of the Armada). It is a different kind of Armada that Woodbridge has to reckon with nowadays. Zeppelins. One dropped a bomb—a "dud" it was—in John Loder's garden; the old man had to be restrained from running out to seize it with his own hands.

John Loder was born in Woodbridge, August 3, 1825. His grandfather, Robert Loder, founded the family bookselling and printing business, which continued until lately at the old shop on the Thoroughfare under John Loder's son, Morton Loder. In the days before the railway came through, Woodbridge was the commercial centre for a large section of East Suffolk; it was a busy port, and the quays were crowded with shipping. But when transportation by rail became swift and

cheap and the provinces began to deal with London merchants, the little town's prosperity suffered a sad decline. Many of the old Woodbridge shops, of several generations' standing, have had to yield to local branches of the great London "stores."

In John Loder's boyhood the book business was at its best. Woodbridgians were great readers, and such prodigal customers as FitzGerald did much to keep the ledgers healthy. John left school at thirteen or so, to learn the trade, and became the traditional printer's devil. He remembered Bernard Barton, the quiet, genial, brown-eyed poet, coming down the street from Alexander's Bank (where he was employed for forty years) with a large pile of banknotes to be renumbered. The poet sat perched on a high stool watching young Loder and his superior do the work. And at noon Mr. Barton sent out to the Royal Oak Tavern near by for a basket of buns and a jug of stout to refresh printer and devil at their work.

Bernard Barton died in 1849, and was laid to rest in the little Friends' burying ground in Turn Lane. That quiet acre will repay the visitor's half-hour tribute to old mortality. My grandmother was buried there, one snowy day in January, 1912, and I remember how old John Loder came forward to the grave, bareheaded and leaning on his stick, to drop a bunch of fresh violets on the coffin.

Many a time I have sat in the quiet, walled-in garden of Burkitt House—that sweet plot of colour and fragrance so pleasantly commemorated by Mr. Mosher in his preface to *In Praise of Old Gardens*—and heard dear old John Loder tell stories of his youth. I remember the verse of Herrick he used to repeat, pointing round his little retreat with a well-stained pipestem:

> But walk'st about thine own dear bounds,
> Not envying others' larger grounds:
> For well thou know'st, 'tis not th' extent
> Of land makes life, but sweet content.

Loder's memory used to go back to times that seem almost fabulous now. He had known quite well an English soldier who was on guard over Boney at St. Helena—in fact, he once published in some newspaper this man's observations upon the fallen emperor, but I have not been able to trace the piece. He had been in Paris before the troubles of '48. I believe he served some sort of bookselling apprenticeship on Paternoster Row; at any rate, he used to be in touch with the London book trade as a young man, and made the acquaintance of Bernard Quaritch, one of the world's most famous booksellers. I remember his lamenting that FitzGerald had not dumped the two hundred unsold booklets of Omar upon his counter instead of Quaritch's in 1859. The story goes that they were offered by Quaritch for a penny apiece.

I always used to steer him onto the subject of FitzGerald sooner or later, and it was interesting to hear him tell how many princes of the literary world had come to his shop or had corresponded with him owing to his knowledge of E. F. G. Anne Thackeray gave him a beautiful portrait of herself in return for some courtesy he showed her. Robert H. Groome, the archdeacon of Suffolk, and his brilliant son, Francis Hindes Groome, the "Tarno Rye" (who wrote *Two Suffolk Friends* and was said by Watts Dunton to have known far more about the gipsies than Borrow) were among his correspondents.* John Hay, Elihu Vedder, Aldis Wright, Canon Ainger, Thomas B. Mosher, Clement Shorter, Dewitt Miller, Edward Clodd, Leon Vincent—such men as these wrote or came to John Loder when they wanted special news about FitzGerald. FitzGerald had given him a great many curios and personal treasures: Mr. Loder never offered these for sale at any price (anything connected with FitzGerald was sacred to him) but if any one happened along who seemed

*No lover of FitzGerald can afford not to own that exquisite tributary volume *Edward FitzGerald: An Aftermath*, by Francis Hindes Groome, which Mr. Mosher published in 1902. It tells a great deal about Woodbridge, and is annotated by John Loder. Mr. Mosher was eager to include Loder's portrait in it, but the old man's modesty was always as great as his generosity: he would not consent.

able to appreciate them he would give them away with delight. He gave to me FitzGerald's old musical scrapbook, which he had treasured for over thirty years. This scrapbook, in perfect condition, contains very beautiful engravings, prints, and drawings of the famous composers, musicians, and operatic stars of whom Fitz was enivré as a young man. Among them are a great many drawings of Handel; FitzGerald, like Samuel Butler, was an enthusiastic Handelian. The pictures are annotated by E. F. G. and there are also two drawings of Beethoven traced by Thackeray. This scrapbook was compiled by FitzGerald when he and Thackeray were living together in London, visiting the Cave of Harmony and revelling in the dear delights of young intellectual companionship. Under a drawing of the famous Braham, dated 1831, Fitz has written: "As I saw and heard him many nights in the Pit of Covent Garden, in company with W. M. Thackeray, whom I was staying with at the Bedford Coffee House."

When I tried, haltingly, to express my thanks for such a gift, the old man said "That's nothing! That's nothing! It'll help to keep you out of mischief. Much better to give 'em away before it's too late!" And he followed it with Canon Ainger's two volumes of Lamb's letters, which Ainger had given him.

Through his long life John Loder lived quietly in Woodbridge, eager and merry in his shop, a great reader, always delighted when any one came in who was qualified to discuss the literature which interested him. He and FitzGerald had long cracks together and perhaps Loder may have accompanied the Woodbridge Omar on some of those trips down the Deben on the *Scandal* or the *Meum and Tuum* (the *Mum and Tum* as Posh, Fitz's sailing master, called her). He played a prominent part in the life of the town, became a Justice of the Peace, and sat regularly on the bench until he was nearly ninety. As he entered upon the years of old age, came a delightful surprise. An old friend of his in the publishing business, whom he had known long before in London, died and left him a handsome legacy by will. Thus his last years were spared from anxiety and he was able to continue his unobtrusive and quiet generosities which had always been his secret delight.

Looking over the preceding paragraphs I am ashamed to see how pale and mumbling a tribute they are to this fine spirit. Could I but put him before you as he was in those last days! I used to go up to Burkitt House to see him: in summer we would sit in the little arbour in the garden, or in winter by the fire in his dining room. He would talk and I would ask him questions; now and then

he would get up to pull down a book, or to lead me into his bedroom to see some special treasure. He used to sit in his shirtsleeves, very close to the fire, with his shoe laces untied. In summer he would toddle about in his shaggy blue suit, with a tweed cap over one ear, his grizzled beard and moustache well stained by much smoking, his eyes as bright and his tongue as brisk as ever. Every warm morning would see him down on the river wall; stumping over Market Hill and down Church Street with his stout oak stick, hailing every child he met on the pavement. His pocket was generally full of peppermints, and the youngsters knew well which pocket it was. His long life was a series of original and graceful kindnesses, always to those who needed them most and had no reason to expect them. No recluse he, no fine scholar, no polished litterateur, but a hard-headed, soft-hearted human man of the sturdy old Suffolk breed. Sometimes I think he was, in his own way, just as great a man as the "Old Fitz," whom he loved and reverenced.

He died on November 7, 1917, aged ninety-two years three months and four days. He was extraordinarily sturdy until nearly ninety—he went in bathing in the surf at Felixstowe on his eighty-sixth birthday. Perhaps the sincerest tribute I can pay him is these lines which I copy from my journal, dated July 16, 1913:

"Went up to have tea with old John Loder, and said a cunningly veiled Good-bye to him. I doubt if I shall see him again, the dear old man. I think he felt so, too, for when he came to the door with me, instead of his usual remark about 'Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest,' he said, 'Farewell to thee' in a more sober manner than his wont—and I left with an armful of books which he had given me 'to keep me out of mischief.' We had a good talk after tea—he told me about the adventures of his brothers, one of whom went out to New Zealand. He uses the most delightful brisk phrases in his talk, smiling away to himself and wrinkling up his forehead, which can only be distinguished from his smooth bald pate by its charming corrugation of parallel furrows. He took me into his den while he rummaged through his books to find some which would be acceptable to me—'May as well give 'em away before it's too late, ye know'—and then he settled back in his easy chair to puff at a pipe. I must note down one of his phrases which tickled me—he has such a knack for the proverbial and the epigrammatic. 'He's cut his cloth, he can wear his breeches,' he said of a certain scapegrace. He chuckled over the Suffolk phrase 'a chance child,' for a bastard (alluding to one such of his acquaintance in old days). He constantly speaks of things he wants to do 'before I tarn my toes up to the daisies.' He told me old

tales of Woodbridge in the time of the Napoleonic wars when there was a garrison of 5,000 soldiers quartered here—this was one of the regions in which an attack by Boney was greatly feared. He says that the Suffolk phrase 'rafty weather' (meaning mist or fog) originates from that time, as being weather suitable for the French to make a surprise attack by rafts or flatboats.

"He chuckled over the reminiscence that he was once a great hand at writing obituary notices for the local paper. 'Weep, weep for him who cried for us,' was the first line of his epitaph upon a former Woodbridge town crier! I was thinking that it would be hard to do him justice when the time comes to write his. May he have a swift and painless end such as his genial spirit deserves, and not linger on into a twilight life with failing senses. When his memory and his pipe and his books begin to fail him, when those keen old eyes grow dim and he can no longer go to sniff the salt air on the river-wall—then may the quick and quiet ferryman take dear old John Loder to the shadow land."

A VENTURE IN MYSTICISM

I HAD heard so much about this Rabbi Tagore and his message of calm for our hustling, feverish life, that I thought I would try to put some of that stuff into practice.

"Shut out the clamour of small things. Withdraw into the deep quiet of your soul, commune with infinite beauty and infinite peace. You must be full of gladness and love for every person and every tiniest thing. Great activity and worry is needless—it is poison to the soul. Learn to reflect, and to brood upon eternal beauty. It is the mystic who finds all that is most precious in life. The flowers of meditation blossom in his heart."

I cut out these words and pasted them in my hat. I have always felt that my real genius lies in the direction of philosophic calm. I determined to override the brutal clamour of petty things.

The alarm clock rang as usual at 6.30. Calmly, with nothing but lovely thoughts in my mind, I threw it out of the window. I lay until eight o'clock, communing with infinite peace. I began to see that Professor Tagore was right. My wife

asked me if I was going to the office. "I am brooding upon eternal beauty," I told her.

She thought I was ill, and made me take breakfast in bed.

I usually shave every morning, but a moment's thought will convince you that mystics do not do so. I determined to grow a beard. I lit a cigar, and replied "I am a mystic" to all my wife's inquiries.

At nine o'clock came a telephone call from the office. My employer is not a devotee of eternal calm, I fear. When I explained that I was at home reading *Gitanjali*, his language was far from mystical. "Get here by ten o'clock or you lose your job," he said.

I was dismayed to see the same old throng in the subway, all the senseless scuffle and the unphilosophic crowd. But I felt full of gladness in my new way of life, full of brotherhood for all the world. "I love you," I said to the guard on the platform. He seized me by the shoulders and rammed me into the crowded car, shouting "Another nut!"

When I reached the office my desk was littered with a hundred papers. The stenographer was at the telephone, trying to pacify someone. "Here he is now," I heard her say.

It was Dennis & Company on the wire.

"How about that carload of Bavarian herrings we were to have yesterday without fail?" said Dennis.

I took the 'phone.

"In God's good time," I said, "the shipment will arrive. The matter is purely ephemeral, after all. If you will attune yourself——"

He rang off.

I turned over the papers on my desk. Looked at with the unclouded eye of a mystic, how mundane and unnecessary all these pettifogging transactions seemed. Two kegs of salt halibut for the Cameron Stores, proofs of the weekly ad. for the *Fishmongers' Journal*, a telegram from the Uptown Fish Morgue, new tires needed for one of the delivery trucks—how could I jeopardize my faculty of meditation by worrying over these trifles? I leaned back in my chair and devoted myself to meditation. After all, the harassing domination of material things can easily be thrown off by a resolute soul. I was full of infinite peace. I seemed to see the future as an ever-widening vista of sublime visions. My soul was thrilled with a universal love of humanity.

The buzzer on my desk sounded. That meant that the boss wanted to see me.

Now, it has always seemed to me that to put one's self at the beck and call of another man is essentially degrading. In the long perspective of eternity, was his soul any more majestic than mine? In this luminous new vision of my importance as a fragment of immortal mind, could I,

should I, bow to the force of impertinent trivialities?

I sat back in my chair, full of love of humanity.

By and by the boss appeared at my desk. One look at his face convinced me of the truth of Tagore's saying that great activity is poison to the soul. Certainly his face was poisonous.

"Say," he shouted, "what the devil's the matter with you to-day? Dennis just called me up about that herring order——"

"Master," I said mildly, "be not overwrought. Great activity is a strychnine to the soul. I am a mystic. . . ."

A little later I found myself on the street with two weeks' pay in my pocket. It is true that my departure had been hasty and unpleasant, for the stairway from the office to the street is long and dusty; but I recalled what Professor Tagore had said about vicissitudes being the true revealers of the spirit. My hat was not with me, but I remembered the creed pasted in it. After pacing a block or so, my soul was once more tranquil.

I entered a restaurant. It was the noon hour, and the room was crowded with hurrying waiters and impatient people. I found a vacant seat in a corner and sat down. I concentrated my mind upon the majestic vision of the brotherhood of man.

Gradually I began to feel hungry, but no waiter

came near me. Never mind, I thought: to shout and hammer the table as the others do is beneath the dignity of a philosopher. I began to dream of endless vistas of mystical ham and eggs. I brooded upon these for some time, but still no corporeal and physical units of food reached me.

The man next me gradually materialized into my consciousness. Full of love for humanity I spoke to him.

"Brother," I said, "until one of these priestly waiters draws nigh, will you not permit me to sustain myself with one of your rolls and one of your butter-balls? In the great brotherhood of humanity, all that is mine is yours; and *per contra*, all that is yours is mine." Beaming luminously upon him, I laid a friendly hand on his arm.

He leaped up and called the head waiter. "Here's an attic for rent!" he cried coarsely. "He wants to pick my pocket."

By the time I got away from the police station it was dusk, and I felt ready for home. I must say my broodings upon eternal beauty were beginning to be a little forced. As I passed along the crowded street, walking slowly and withdrawn into the quiet of my soul, three people trod upon my heels and a taxi nearly gave me a passport to eternity. I reflected that men were perhaps not yet ready for these doctrines of infinite peace. How much more wise were the animals—and I

raised my hand to stroke a huge dray-horse by the pavement. He seized my fingers in his teeth and nipped them vigorously.

I gave a yell and ran full tilt to the nearest subway entrance. I burst into the mass of struggling, unphilosophic humanity and fought, shoved, cursed, and buffeted with them. I pushed three old ladies to one side to snatch my ticket before they could get theirs. I leaped into the car at the head of a flying wedge of sinful, unmystical men, who knew nothing of infinite beauty and peace. As the door closed I pushed a decrepit clergyman outside, and I hope he fell on the third rail. As I felt the lurching, trampling, throttling jam of humanity sway to and fro with the motion of the car, I drew a long breath. Dare I confess it?—I was perfectly happy!

AN OXFORD LANDLADY

IT WAS a crisp October afternoon, and along Iffley Road the wind was chivvying the yellow leaves. We stood at the window watching the flappers opposite play hockey. One of them had a scarlet tam-o'-shanter and glorious dark hair underneath it. . . . A quiet tap at the door, gentle but definite, and in came Mrs. Beesley.

If you have been at our digs, you know her by sight, and have not forgotten. Hewn of the real imperial marble is she, not unlike Queen Victoria in shape and stature. She tells us she used to dance featly and with abandon in days gone by, when her girlish slimness was the admiration of every greengrocer's assistant in Oxford—and even in later days when she and Dr. Warren always opened the Magdalen servants' ball together. She and the courtly President were always the star couple. I can see her doing the Sir Roger de Coverley. But the virgin zone was loosed long ago, and she has expanded with the British Empire. Not rotund, but rather imposingly cubic. Our hallway

is a very narrow one, and when you come to visit us of an evening, after red-cheeked Emily has gone off to better tilting grounds, it is a prime delight to see Mrs. Beesley backing down the passage (like a stately canal boat) before the advancing guest. Very large of head and very pink of cheek, very fond of a brisk conversation, some skill at cooking, slow and full of dignity on the stairs, much reminiscent of former lodgers, bold as a lion when she thinks she is imposed upon, but otherwhiles humorous and placable—such is our Mrs. Beesley.

She saw us standing by the window, and thought we were watching the leaves twisting up the roadway in golden spirals.

"Watching the wind?" she said pleasantly. "I loves to see the leaves 'avin' a frolic. They enjoys it, same as young gentlemen do."

"Or young ladies?" I suggested. "We were watching the flappers play hockey, Mrs. Beesley. One of them is a most fascinating creature. I think her name must be Kathleen. . . ."

Mrs. Beesley chuckled merrily and threw up her head in that delightful way of hers. "Oh, dear, oh, dear, you're just like all the other gentlemen," she said. "Always awatchin' and awaitin' for the young ladies. Mr. Bye that used to be 'ere was just the same, an' he was engaged to be marrit. 'Ad some of 'em in to tea once, he did. I thought

it was scandalous, and 'im almost a marrit gentleman."

"Don't you remember what the poet says, Mrs. Beesley?" I suggested:

> "Beauty must be scorned in none
> Though but truly served in one."

"Not much danger of you gentlemen bein' too scornful," said Mrs. Beesley. Her eyes began to sparkle now that she saw herself fairly embarked upon a promising conversation. She sidled a little farther into the room. Lloyd winked at me and quietly escaped behind her.

"Seeing as we're alone," said Mrs. Beesley, "I come to you to see about dinner to-night. I knows as you're the father of 'em all." (That is her quaint way of saying that she thinks me the leading spirit of the three who dig with her.) "How about a little jugged 'are? Nice little 'ares there are in Cowley Road now. I thinks 'are is very tender an' tasty. That, an' a nice 'ot cup o' tea?"

The last 'are had been, in Tennyson's phrase, "the heir of all the ages," so I deprecated the suggestion. "I don't think hare agrees with Mr. Williams," I said.

"'Ow about a pheasant?" said Mrs. Beesley, stroking the corner of the table with her hand as she always does when in deep thought. "A pheas-

ant and a Welsh rabbit, not too peppery. That goes well with the cider. Dr. Warren came 'ere to dinner once, an' he had a Welsh rabbit and never forgot it. 'E allus used to say when 'e saw me, ''Ow about that Welsh rabbit, Mrs. Beesley?' Oh, dear, oh, dear, 'e *is* a kind gentleman! 'E gave us a book once—'*Istory of Magdalen College*. I think he wrote it 'imself."

"I think a pheasant would be very nice," I said, and began looking for a book.

"Do you think Mr. Loomis will be back from town in time for dinner?" asked Mrs. Beesley. "I know 'e's fond o' pheasant. He'd come if he knew."

"We might send him a telegram," I said.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear!" sighed Mrs. Beesley, overcome by such a fantastic thought. "You know, Mr. Morley, a funny thing 'appened this morning," she said. "Em'ly and I were making Mr. Loomis's bed. But we didn't find 'is clothes all lyin' about the floor same as 'e usually does. 'I wonder what's 'appened to Mr. Loomis's clothes?' said Em'ly.

"'P'raps 'e's took 'em up to town to pawn 'em.' I said. (You know we 'ad a gent'man 'ere once that pawned nearly all 'is things—a Jesus gentleman 'e was.)

"Em'ly says to me, 'I wonder what the three balls on a pawnbroker's sign mean?'

"'Why don't you know, Em'ly?' I says. 'It means it's two to one you never gets 'em back.'"

Just then there was a ring at the bell and Mrs. Beesley rolled away chuckling. And I returned to the window to watch Kathleen play hockey.

UNHEALTHY

ON SATURDAY afternoons Titania and I always have an adventure. On Sundays we stay at home and dutifully read manuscripts (I am the obscure creature known as a "publisher's reader") but Saturday post meridiem is a golden tract of time wherein we wander as we list.

The Thirty-fifth Street entrance to McQueery's has long been hallowed as our *stell-dich-ein*. We meet there at one o'clock. That is to say, I arrive at 12:59 and spend fifteen minutes in most animated reflection. There is plenty to think about. One may stand between the outer and inner lines of glass doors and watch the queer little creatures that come tumbling out of the cloak and suit factory across the street. Or one may stand inside the store, on a kind of terrace, beneath pineapple shaped arc lights, looking down upon the bustle of women on the main floor. Best of all, one may stroll along the ornate gallery to one side where all sorts and conditions of ladies wait for other ladies who have promised to meet them at one o'clock.

They divide their time between examining the mahogany victrolae and deciding what kind of sundae they will have for lunch. A very genteel old gentleman with white hair and a long morning coat and an air of perpetual irritation is in charge of this social gallery. He wears the queer, soft, flat-soled boots that are suggestive of corns. There is an information bureau there, where one may learn everything except the time one may expect one's wife to arrive. But I have learned a valuable subterfuge. If I am waiting for Titania, and beginning to despair of her arrival, I have only to go to a telephone to call her up. As soon as I have put the nickel in, she is sure to appear. Nowadays I save the nickel by going into a booth and *pretending* to telephone. Sure enough, at 1:14, Ingersoll time, in she trots.

We have a jargon of our own.

"Eye-polishers?" say I.

"Yes," says Titania, "but there was a block at Forty-second Street. I'm *so* sorry, Grump."

"Eye-polishers" is our term for the Fifth Avenue busses, because riding on them makes Titania's eyes so bright. More widely, the word connotes anything that produces that desirable result, such as bunches of violets, lavender peddlers, tea at Mary Elizabeth's, spring millinery, or finding sixpence in her shoe. This last is a rite suggested by the old song:

And though maids sweep their hearths no less
Than they were wont to do,
Yet who doth now for cleanliness
Find sixpence in her shoe?

A bright dime does very well as a sixpenny piece.

We always lunch at Moretti's on Saturday: it is the recognized beginning of an adventure. The Moretti lunch has advanced from a quarter to thirty cents, I am sorry to say, but this is readily compensated by the Grump buying Sweet Caporals instead of something Turkish. A packet of cigarettes is another curtain-raiser for an adventure. On other days publishers' readers smoke pipes, but on Saturdays cigarettes are possible.

"Antipasto?"

"No, thanks."

"Minestrone or consommé?"

"Two minestrone, two prime ribs, ice cream, and coffee. Red wine, please." That is the formula. We have eaten the "old reliable Moretti lunch" so often that the routine has become a ritual. O excellent savour of the Moretti basement! Compounded of warmth, a pungent pourri of smells, and the jangle of thick china, how diverting it is! The franc-tireur in charge of the wine-bin watches us complaisantly from his counter where he sits flanked by flasks of Hoboken chianti and a case of brittle cigars.

How good Moretti's minestrone tastes to the

unsophisticated tongue. What though it be only an azoic extract of intense potato, dimly tinct with sargasso and macaroni—it has a pleasing warmth and bulk. Is it not the prelude to an Adventure?

Well, where shall we go to-day? No two explorers dickering over azimuth and dead reckoning could discuss latitude and longitude more earnestly than Titania and I argue our possible courses. Generally, however, she leaves it to me to chart the journey. That gives me the pride of conductor and her the pleasure of being surprised.

According to our Mercator's projection (which, duly wrapped in a waterproof envelope, we always carry on our adventures) there was a little-known region lying nor' nor'west of Blackwell's Island and plotted on the map as East River Park. I had heard of this as a picturesque and old-fashioned territory, comparatively free from footpads and lying near such places as Astoria and Hell Gate. We laid a romantic course due east along Thirty-fifth Street, Titania humming a little snatch from an English music-hall song that once amused us:

"My old man's a fireman
Now what do you think of that?
He wears goblimey breeches
And a little goblimey hat."

She always quotes this to me when (she says) I wear my hat too far on the back of my head.

The cross slope of Murray Hill drops steeply downward after one leaves Madison Avenue. We dipped into a region that has always been very fascinating to me. Under the roaring L, past dingy saloons, animal shops, tinsmiths, and painless dentists, past the old dismantled Manhattan hospital. The taste of spring was in the air: one of the dentists was having his sign regilded, a huge four-pronged grinder as big as McTeague's in Frank Norris's story. Oysters going out, the new brew of Bock beer coming in: so do the saloons mark the vernal equinox.

A huge green chalet built on stilts, with two tiers of trains rumbling by, is the L station at Thirty-fourth Street and Second Avenue. A cutting wind blew from the East River, only two blocks away. I paid two nickels and we got into the front car of the northbound train.

Until Titania and I attain the final glory of riding in an aëroplane, or ascend Jacob's ladder, there never will be anything so thrilling as soaring over the housetops in the Second Avenue L. Rocking, racketing, roaring over those crazy trestles, now a glimpse of the leaden river to the east, now a peep of church spires and skyscrapers on the west, and the dingy imitation lace curtains of the third-story windows flashing by like a recurring

pattern—it is a voyage of romance! Did you ever stand at the front door of an Elevated train, watching the track stretch far ahead toward the Bronx, and the little green stations slipping nearer and nearer? The Subway is a black, bellowing horror; the bus a swaying, jolty start-and-stop, bruising your knees against the seat in front; but the L swings you up and over the housetops, smooth and sheer and swift.

We descended at Eighty-sixth Street and found ourselves in a new world. A broad, dingy street, lined by shabby brown houses and pushbutton apartments, led in a gentle descent toward the river. The neighbourhood was noisy, quarrelsome, and dirty. After a long, bitter March the thaw had come at last: the street was viscous with slime. the melting snow lay in grayish piles along the curbs. Small boys on each side of the street were pelting sodden snowballs which spattered around us as we walked down the pavement.

But after two blocks things changed suddenly. The trolley swung round at a right angle (up Avenue A) and the last block of Eighty-sixth Street showed the benefit of this manœuvre. The houses grew neat and respectable. A little side street branching off to the left (not recorded by Mercator) revealed some quaint cottages with gables and shuttered windows so mid-Victorian that my literary heart leaped and I dreamed at

once of locating a novel in this fascinating spot. And then we rounded the corner and saw the little park.

It was a bit of old Chelsea, nothing less. Titania clapped her hands, and I lit my pipe in gratification. Beside us was a row of little houses of warm red brick with peaked mansard roofs and cozy bay windows and polished door knockers. In front of them was the lumpy little park, cut up into irregular hills, where children were flying kites. And beyond that, an embankment and the river in a dim wet mist. There was Blackwell's Island, and a sailing barge slipping by. In the distance we could see the colossal span of the new Hell Gate bridge. With the journalist's instinct for superlatives I told Titania it was the largest single span in the world. I wonder if it is?

As to that I know not. But it was the river that lured us. On the embankment we found benches and sat down to admire the scene. It was as picturesque as Battersea in Whistler's mistiest days. A ferryboat, crossing to Astoria, hooted musically through the haze. Tugs, puffing up past Blackwell's Island into the Harlem River, replied with mellow blasts. The pungent tang of the East River tickled our nostrils, and all my old ambition to be a tugboat captain returned.

And then trouble began. Just as I was planning how we might bilk our landlord on Long Island

and move all our belongings to this delicious spot, gradually draw our friends around us, and make East End Avenue the Cheyne Walk of New York —we might even import an English imagist poet to lend cachet to the coterie—I saw by Titania's face that something was wrong.

I pressed her for the reason of her frown.

She thought the region was unhealthy.

Now when Titania thinks that a place is unhealthy no further argument is possible. Just on what data she bases these deductions I have never been able to tell. I think she can tell by the shape of the houses, or the lush quality of the foliage, or the fact that the garbage men collect from the front instead of from the back. But however she arrives at the conclusion, it is immutable.

Any place that I think is peculiarly amusing, or quaint, or picturesque, Titania thinks is unhealthy.

Sometimes I can see it coming. We are on our way to Mulberry Bend, or the Bowery, or Farrish's Chop House. I see her brow begin to pucker. "Do you feel as though it is going to be unhealthy?" I ask anxiously. If she does, there is nothing for it but to clutch at the nearest subway station and hurry up to Grant's Tomb. In that bracing ether her spirits revive.

So it was on this afternoon. My utopian vision of a Chelsea in New York, outdoing the grimy

salons of Greenwich Village, fell in splinters at the bottom of my mind. Sadly I looked upon the old Carl Schurz mansion on the hill, and we departed for the airy plateaus of Central Park. Desperately I pointed to the fading charms of East River Park—the convent round the corner, the hokey pokey cart by the curbstone.

I shall never be a tugboat captain. It isn't healthy.

ON FILLING AN INK-WELL

THOSE who buy their ink in little stone jugs may prefer to do so because the pottle reminds them of cruiskeen lawn or ginger beer (with its wire-bound cork), but they miss a noble delight. Ink should be bought in the tall, blue glass, quart bottle (with the ingenious non-drip spout), and once every three weeks or so, when you fill your ink-well, it is your privilege to elevate the flask against the brightness of a window, and meditate (with a breath of sadness) on the joys and problems that sacred fluid holds in solution.

How blue it shines toward the light! Blue as lupin or larkspur, or cornflower—aye, and even so blue art thou, my scriven, to think how far the written page falls short of the bright ecstasy of thy dream. In the bottle, what magnificence of unpenned stuff lies cool and liquid: what fluency of essay, what fonts of song. As the bottle glints, blue as a squill or a hyacinth, blue as the meadows of Elysium or the eyes of girls loved by young poets, meseems the racing pen might almost gain

upon the thoughts that are turning the bend in the road. A jolly throng, those thoughts: I can see them talking and laughing together. But when pen reaches the road's turning, the thoughts are gone far ahead: their delicate figures are silhouettes against the sky.

It is a sacramental matter, this filling the ink-well. Is there a writer, however humble, who has not poured into his writing pot, with the ink, some wistful hopes or prayers for what may emerge from that dark source? Is there not some particular reverence due the ink-well, some form of propitiation to humbug the powers of evil and constraint that devil the journalist? Satan hovers near the ink-pot. Luther solved the matter by throwing the well itself at the apparition. That savours to me too much of homeopathy.

But what becomes of the ink-pots of glory? The conduit from which Boswell drew, for Charles Dilly in The Poultry, the great river of his Johnson? The well (was it of blue china?) whence flowed "Dream Children: a Revery"? (It was written on folio ledger sheets from the East India House—I saw the manuscript only yesterday in a room at Daylesford, Pennsylvania, where much of the richest ink of the last two centuries is lovingly laid away.) The pot of chuckling fluid where Harry Fielding dipped his pen to tell the history of a certain foundling; the ink-wells of the

Café de la Source on the Boul' Mich'—do they by any chance remember which it was that R. L. S. used? One of the happiest tremors of my life was when I went to that café and called for a bock and writing material, just because R. L. S. had once written letters there. And the ink-well Poe used at that boarding-house in Greenwich Street, New York (April, 1844), when he wrote to his dear Muddy (his mother-in-law) to describe how he and Virginia had reached a haven of square meals. That hopeful letter, so perfect now in pathos—

> For breakfast we had excellent-flavoured coffee, hot and strong—not very clear and no great deal of cream—veal cutlets, elegant ham and eggs and nice bread and butter. I never sat down to a more plentiful or a nicer breakfast. I wish you could have seen the eggs—and the great dishes of meat. Sis [his wife] is delighted, and we are both in excellent spirits. She has coughed hardly any and had no night sweat. She is now busy mending my pants which I tore against a nail. I went out last night and bought a skein of silk, a skein of thread, two buttons, a pair of slippers, and a tin pan for the stove. The fire kept in all night. We have now got four dollars and a half left. To-morrow I am going to try and borrow three dollars, so that I may have a fortnight to go upon. I feel in excellent spirits, and haven't drank a drop—so that I hope soon to get out of trouble.

Yes, let us clear the typewriter off the table: an ink-well is a sacred thing.

Do you ever stop to think, when you see the grimy spattered desks of a public post-office, how many eager or puzzled human hearts have tried, in those dingy little ink-cups, to set themselves right with fortune? What blissful meetings have been appointed, what scribblings of pain and sorrow, out of those founts of common speech. And the ink-wells on hotel counters—does not the public dipping place of the Bellevue Hotel, Boston, win a new dignity in my memory when I know (as I learned lately) that Rupert Brooke registered there in the spring of 1914? I remember, too, a certain pleasant vibration when, signing my name one day in the Bellevue's book, I found Miss Agnes Repplier's autograph a little above on the same page.

Among our younger friends, Vachel Lindsay comes to mind as one who has done honour to the ink-well. His "Apology for the Bottle Volcanic" is in his best flow of secret smiling (save an unfortunate dilution of Riley):

Sometimes I dip my pen and find the bottle full of fire,
The salamanders flying forth I cannot but admire. . . .
O sad deceiving ink, as bad as liquor in its way—
All demons of a bottle size have pranced from you to-day,
And seized my pen for hobby-horse as witches ride a broom,
And left a trail of brimstone words and blots and gobs of gloom.

And yet when I am extra good . . . [*here I omit the transfusion of Riley*]
My bottle spreads a rainbow mist, and from the vapour fine
Ten thousand troops from fairyland come riding in a line.

I suppose it is the mark of a trifling mind, yet I like to hear of the little particulars that surrounded those whose pens struck sparks. It is Boswell that leads us into that habit of thought. I like to know what the author wore, how he sat, what the furniture of his desk and chamber, who cooked his meals for him, and with what appetite he approached them. "The mind soars by an effort to the grand and lofty" (so dipped Hazlitt in some favoured ink-bottle)—"it is at home in the groveling, the disagreeable, and the little."

I like to think, as I look along book shelves, that every one of these favourites was born out of an ink-well. I imagine the hopes and visions that thronged the author's mind as he filled his pot and sliced the quill. What various fruits have flowed from those ink-wells of the past: for some, comfort and honour, quiet homes and plenteousness, for others, bitterness and disappointment. I have seen a copy of Poe's poems, published in 1845 by Putnam, inscribed by the author. The volume had been bought for $2,500. Think what that would have meant to Poe himself.

Some such thoughts as these twinkled in my head as I held up the Pierian bottle against the light, admired the deep blue of it, and filled my ink-well. And then I took up my pen, which wrote:

A GRACE BEFORE WRITING

This is a sacrament, I think!
  Holding the bottle toward the light,
As blue as lupin gleams the ink:
  May Truth be with me as I write!

That small dark cistern may afford
  Reunion with some vanished friend,—
And with this ink I have just poured
  May none but honest words be penned!

OLD THOUGHTS FOR CHRISTMAS

A NEW thought for Christmas? Who ever wanted a new thought for Christmas? That man should be shot who would try to think one. It is an impertinence even to write about Christmas. Christmas is a matter that humanity has taken so deeply to heart that we will not have our festival meddled with by bungling hands. No efficiency expert would dare tell us that Christmas is inefficient; that the clockwork toys will soon be broken; that no one can eat a peppermint cane a yard long; that the curves on our chart of kindness should be ironed out so that the "peak load" of December would be evenly distributed through the year. No sour-face dare tell us that we drive postmen and shopgirls into Bolshevism by overtaxing them with our frenzied purchasing or that it is absurd to send to a friend in a steam-heated apartment in a prohibition republic a bright little picture card of a gentleman in Georgian costume drinking ale by a roaring fire of logs. None in his senses, I say, would emit such

sophistries, for Christmas is a law unto itself and is not conducted by card-index. Even the postmen and shopgirls, severe though their labours, would not have matters altered. There is none of us who does not enjoy hardship and bustle that contribute to the happiness of others.

There is an efficiency of the heart that transcends and contradicts that of the head. Things of the spirit differ from things material in that the more you give the more you have. The comedian has an immensely better time than the audience. To modernize the adage, to give is more fun than to receive. Especially if you have wit enough to give to those who don't expect it. Surprise is the most primitive joy of humanity. Surprise is the first reason for a baby's laughter. And at Christmas time, when we are all a little childish I hope, surprise is the flavour of our keenest joys. We all remember the thrill with which we once heard, behind some closed door, the rustle and crackle of paper parcels being tied up. We knew that we were going to be surprised—a delicious refinement and luxuriant seasoning of the emotion!

Christmas, then, conforms to this deeper efficiency of the heart. We are not methodical in kindness; we do not "fill orders" for consignments of affection. We let our kindness ramble and explore; old forgotten friendships pop up in our minds and we mail a card to Harry Hunt, of

Minneapolis (from whom we have not heard for half a dozen years), "just to surprise him." A business man who shipped a carload of goods to a customer, just to surprise him, would soon perish of abuse. But no one ever refuses a shipment of kindness, because no one ever feels overstocked with it. It is coin of the realm, current everywhere. And we do not try to measure our kindnesses to the capacity of our friends. Friendship is not measurable in calories. How many times this year have you "turned" your stock of kindness?

It is the gradual approach to the Great Surprise that lends full savour to the experience. It has been thought by some that Christmas would gain in excitement if no one knew when it was to be; if (keeping the festival within the winter months) some public functionary were to announce some unexpected morning, "A week from to-day will be Christmas!" Then what a scurrying and joyful frenzy—what a festooning of shops and mad purchasing of presents! But it would not be half the fun of the slow approach of the familiar date. All through November and December we watch it drawing nearer; we see the shop windows begin to glow with red and green and lively colours; we note the altered demeanour of bellboys and janitors as the Date flows quietly toward us; we pass through the haggard perplexity of "Only Four

Days More" when we suddenly realize it is too late to make our shopping the display of lucid affectionate reasoning we had contemplated, and clutch wildly at grotesque tokens—and then (sweetest of all) comes the quiet calmness of Christmas Eve. Then, while we decorate the tree or carry parcels of tissue paper and red ribbon to a carefully prepared list of aunts and godmothers, or reckon up a little pile of bright quarters on the dining-room table in preparation for to-morrow's largesse—then it is that the brief, poignant and precious sweetness of the experience claims us at the full. Then we can see that all our careful wisdom and shrewdness were folly and stupidity; and we can understand the meaning of that Great Surprise—that where we planned wealth we found ourselves poor; that where we thought to be impoverished we were enriched. The world is built upon a lovely plan if we take time to study the blue-prints of the heart.

Humanity must be forgiven much for having invented Christmas. What does it matter that a great poet and philosopher urges "the abandonment of the masculine pronoun in allusions to the First or Fundamental Energy?" Theology is not saddled upon pronouns; the best doctrine is but three words, God is Love. Love, or kindness, is fundamental energy enough to satisfy any brooder. And Christmas Day means the birth of a

child; that is to say, the triumph of life and hope over suffering.

Just for a few hours on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day the stupid, harsh mechanism of the world runs down and we permit ourselves to live according to untrammelled common sense, the unconquerable efficiency of good will. We grant ourselves the complete and selfish pleasure of loving others better than ourselves. How odd it seems, how unnaturally happy we are! We feel there must be some mistake, and rather yearn for the familiar frictions and distresses. Just for a few hours we "purge out of every heart the lurking grudge." We know then that hatred is a form of illness; that suspicion and pride are only fear; that the rascally acts of others are perhaps, in the queer webwork of human relations, due to some callousness of our own. Who knows? Some man may have robbed a bank in Nashville or fired a gun in Louvain because we looked so intolerably smug in Philadelphia!

So at Christmas we tap that vast reservoir of wisdom and strength—call it efficiency or the fundamental energy if you will—Kindness. And our kindness, thank heaven, is not the placid kindness of angels; it is veined with human blood; it is full of absurdities, irritations, frustrations. A man 100 per cent. kind would be intolerable. As a wise teacher said, the milk of human kind-

ness easily curdles into cheese. We like our friends' affections because we know the tincture of mortal acid is in them. We remember the satirist who remarked that to love one's self is the beginning of a lifelong romance. We know this lifelong romance will resume its sway; we shall lose our tempers, be obstinate, peevish and crank. We shall fidget and fume while waiting our turn in the barber's chair; we shall argue and muddle and mope. And yet, for a few hours, what a happy vision that was! And we turn, on Christmas Eve, to pages which those who speak our tongue immortally associate with the season—the pages of Charles Dickens. Love of humanity endures as long as the thing it loves, and those pages are packed as full of it as a pound cake is full of fruit. A pound cake will keep moist three years; a sponge cake is dry in three days.

And now humanity has its most beautiful and most appropriate Christmas gift—Peace. The Magi of Versailles and Washington having unwound for us the tissue paper and red ribbon (or red tape) from this greatest of all gifts, let us in days to come measure up to what has been born through such anguish and horror. If war is illness and peace is health, let us remember also that health is not merely a blessing to be received intact once and for all. It is not a substance but a condition, to be maintained only by sound régime,

self-discipline and simplicity. Let the Wise Men not be too wise; let them remember those other Wise Men who, after their long journey and their sage surmisings, found only a Child. On this evening it serves us nothing to pile up filing cases and rolltop desks toward the stars, for in our city square the Star itself has fallen, and shines upon the Tree.

ON UNANSWERING LETTERS

THERE are a great many people who really believe in answering letters the day they are received, just as there are people who go to the movies at nine o'clock in the morning; but these people are stunted and queer.

It is a great mistake. Such crass and breathless promptness takes away a great deal of the pleasure of correspondence.

The psychological didoes involved in receiving letters and making up one's mind to answer them are very complex. If the tangled process could be clearly analyzed and its component involutions isolated for inspection we might reach a clearer comprehension of that curious bag of tricks, the efficient Masculine Mind.

Take Bill F., for instance, a man so delightful that even to contemplate his existence puts us in good humour and makes us think well of a world that can exhibit an individual equally comely in mind, body and estate. Every now and then we get a letter from Bill, and immediately we pass

into a kind of trance, in which our mind rapidly enunciates the ideas, thoughts, surmises and contradictions that we would like to write to him in reply. We think what fun it would be to sit right down and churn the ink-well, spreading speculation and cynicism over a number of sheets of foolscap to be wafted Billward.

Sternly we repress the impulse for we know that the shock to Bill of getting so immediate a retort would surely unhinge the well-fitted panels of his intellect.

We add his letter to the large delta of unanswered mail on our desk, taking occasion to turn the mass over once or twice and run through it in a brisk, smiling mood, thinking of all the jolly letters we shall write some day.

After Bill's letter has lain on the pile for a fortnight or so it has been gently silted over by about twenty other pleasantly postponed manuscripts. Coming upon it by chance, we reflect that any specific problems raised by Bill in that manifesto will by this time have settled themselves. And his random speculations upon household management and human destiny will probably have taken a new slant by now, so that to answer his letter in its own tune will not be congruent with his present fevers. We had better bide a wee until we really have something of circumstance to impart.

We wait a week.

By this time a certain sense of shame has begun to invade the privacy of our brain. We feel that to answer that letter now would be an indelicacy. Better to pretend that we never got it. By and bye Bill will write again and then we will answer promptly. We put the letter back in the middle of the heap and think what a fine chap Bill is. But he knows we love him, so it doesn't really matter whether we write or not.

Another week passes by, and no further communication from Bill. We wonder whether he does love us as much as we thought. Still—we are too proud to write and ask.

A few days later a new thought strikes us. Perhaps Bill thinks we have died and he is annoyed because he wasn't invited to the funeral. Ought we to wire him? No, because after all we are not dead, and even if he thinks we are, his subsequent relief at hearing the good news of our survival will outweigh his bitterness during the interval. One of these days we will write him a letter that will really express our heart, filled with all the grindings and gear-work of our mind, rich in affection and fallacy. But we had better let it ripen and mellow for a while. Letters, like wines, accumulate bright fumes and bubblings if kept under cork.

Presently we turn over that pile of letters again.

We find in the lees of the heap two or three that have gone for six months and can safely be destroyed. Bill is still on our mind, but in a pleasant, dreamy kind of way. He does not ache or twinge us as he did a month ago. It is fine to have old friends like that and keep in touch with them. We wonder how he is and whether he has two children or three. Splendid old Bill!

By this time we have written Bill several letters in imagination and enjoyed doing so, but the matter of sending him an actual letter has begun to pall. The thought no longer has the savour and vivid sparkle it had once. When one feels like that it is unwise to write. Letters should be spontaneous outpourings: they should never be undertaken merely from a sense of duty. We know that Bill wouldn't want to get a letter that was dictated by a feeling of obligation.

Another fortnight or so elapsing, it occurs to us that we have entirely forgotten what Bill said to us in that letter. We take it out and con it over. Delightful fellow! It is full of his own felicitous kinks of whim, though some of it sounds a little old-fashioned by now. It seems a bit stale, has lost some of its freshness and surprise. Better not answer it just yet, for Christmas will soon be here and we shall have to write then anyway. We wonder, can Bill hold out until Christmas without a letter?

We have been rereading some of those imaginary letters to Bill that have been dancing in our head. They are full of all sorts of fine stuff. If Bill ever gets them he will know how we love him. To use O. Henry's immortal joke, we have days of Damon and Knights of Pythias writing those uninked letters to Bill. A curious thought has come to us. Perhaps it would be better if we never saw Bill again. It is very difficult to talk to a man when you like him so much. It is much easier to write in the sweet fantastic strain. We are so inarticulate when face to face. If Bill comes to town we will leave word that we have gone away. Good old Bill! He will always be a precious memory.

A few days later a sudden frenzy sweeps over us, and though we have many pressing matters on hand, we mobilize pen and paper and literary shock troops and prepare to hurl several battalions at Bill. But, strangely enough, our utterance seems stilted and stiff. We have nothing to say. *My dear Bill*, we begin, *it seems a long time since we heard from you. Why don't you write? We still love you, in spite of all your shortcomings.*

That doesn't seem very cordial. We muse over the pen and nothing comes. Bursting with affection, we are unable to say a word.

Just then the 'phone rings. "Hello?" we say.

It is Bill, come to town unexpectedly.

"Good old fish!" we cry, ecstatic. "Meet you

at the corner of Tenth and Chestnut in five minutes."

We tear up the unfinished letter. Bill will never know how much we love him. Perhaps it is just as well. It is very embarrassing to have your friends know how you feel about them. When we meet him we will be a little bit on our guard. It would not be well to be betrayed into any extravagance of cordiality.

And perhaps a not altogether false little story could be written about a man who never visited those most dear to him, because it hurt him so to say good-bye when he had to leave.

WHAT MEN LIVE BY

WHAT a delicate and rare and gracious art is the art of conversation! With what a dexterity and skill the bubble of speech must be manœuvred if mind is to meet and mingle with mind.

There is no sadder disappointment than to realize that a conversation has been a complete failure. By which we mean that it has failed in blending or isolating for contrast the ideas, opinions and surmises of two eager minds. So often a conversation is shipwrecked by the very eagerness of one member to contribute. There must be give and take, parry and thrust, patience to hear and judgment to utter. How uneasy is the qualm as one looks back on an hour's talk and sees that the opportunity was wasted; the precious instant of intercourse gone forever: the secrets of the heart still incommunicate! Perhaps we were too anxious to hurry the moment, to enforce our own theory, to adduce instance from our own experience. Perhaps we were not patient enough to wait until our friend could express himself with ease and

happiness. Perhaps we squandered the dialogue in tangent topics, in a multitude of irrelevances.

How few, how few are those gifted for real talk! There are fine merry fellows, full of mirth and shrewdly minted observation, who will not abide by one topic, who must always be lashing out upon some new byroad, snatching at every bush they pass. They are too excitable, too ungoverned for the joys of patient intercourse. Talk is so solemn a rite it should be approached with prayer and must be conducted with nicety and forbearance. What steadiness and sympathy are needed if the thread of thought is to be unwound without tangles or snapping! What forbearance, while each of the pair, after tentative gropings here and yonder, feels his way toward truth as he sees it. So often two in talk are like men standing back to back, each trying to describe to the other what he sees and disputing because their visions do not tally. It takes a little time for minds to turn face to face.

Very often conversations are better among three than between two, for the reason that then one of the trio is always, unconsciously, acting as umpire, interposing fair play, recalling wandering wits to the nub of the argument, seeing that the aggressiveness of one does no foul to the reticence of another. Talk in twos may, alas! fall into speaker and listener: talk in threes rarely does so.

It is little realized how slowly, how painfully, we approach the expression of truth. We are so variable, so anxious to be polite, and alternately swayed by caution or anger. Our mind oscillates like a pendulum: it takes some time for it to come to rest. And then, the proper allowance and correction has to be made for our individual vibrations that prevent accuracy. Even the compass needle doesn't point the true north, but only the magnetic north. Similarly our minds at best can but indicate magnetic truth, and are distorted by many things that act as iron filings do on the compass. The necessity of holding one's job: what an iron filing that is on the compass card of a man's brain!

We are all afraid of truth: we keep a battalion of our pet prejudices and precautions ready to throw into the argument as shock troops, rather than let our fortress of Truth be stormed. We have smoke bombs and decoy ships and all manner of cunning colourizations by which we conceal our innards from our friends, and even from ourselves. How we fume and fidget, how we bustle and dodge rather than commit ourselves.

In days of hurry and complication, in the incessant pressure of human problems that thrust our days behind us, does one never dream of a way of life in which talk would be honoured and exalted to its proper place in the sun? What a zest there is in that intimate unreserved exchange of

thought, in the pursuit of the magical blue bird of joy and human satisfaction that may be seen flitting distantly through the branches of life. It was a sad thing for the world when it grew so busy that men had no time to talk. There are such treasures of knowledge and compassion in the minds of our friends, could we only have time to talk them out of their shy quarries. If we had our way, we would set aside one day a week for talking. In fact, we would reorganize the week altogether. We would have one day for Worship (let each man devote it to worship of whatever he holds dearest); one day for Work; one day for Play (probably fishing); one day for Talking; one day for Reading, and one day for Smoking and Thinking. That would leave one day for Resting, and (incidentally) interviewing employers.

The best week of our life was one in which we did nothing but talk. We spent it with a delightful gentleman who has a little bungalow on the shore of a lake in Pike County. He had a great many books and cigars, both of which are conversational stimulants. We used to lie out on the edge of the lake, in our oldest trousers, and talk. We discussed ever so many subjects; in all of them he knew immensely more than we did. We built up a complete philosophy of indolence and good will, according to Food and Sleep and Swimming their proper share of homage. We rose at ten in the

morning and began talking; we talked all day and until three o'clock at night. Then we went to bed and regained strength and combativeness for the coming day. Never was a week better spent. We committed no crimes, planned no secret treaties, devised no annexations or indemnities. We envied no one. We examined the entire world and found it worth while. Meanwhile our wives, who were watching (perhaps with a little quiet indignation) from the veranda, kept on asking us, "What on earth do you talk about?"

Bless their hearts, men don't have to have anything to talk *about*. They just talk.

And there is only one rule for being a good talker: learn how to listen.

THE UNNATURAL NATURALIST

IT GIVES us a great deal of pleasure to announce, officially, that spring has arrived.

Our statement is not based on any irrelevant data as to equinoxes or bluebirds or bock-beer signs, but is derived from the deepest authority we know anything about, our subconscious self. We remember that some philosopher, perhaps it was Professor James, suggested that individuals are simply peaks of self-consciousness rising out of the vast ocean of collective human Mind in which we all swim, and are, at bottom, one. Whenever we have to decide any important matter, such as when to get our hair cut and whether to pay a bill or not, and whether to call for the check or let the other fellow do so, we don't attempt to harass our conscious volition with these decisions. We rely on our subconscious and instinctive person, and for better or worse we have to trust to its righteousness and good sense. We just find ourself doing something and we carry on and hope it is for the best.

From this deep abyss of subconscious we learn

that it is spring. The mottled goosebone of the Allentown prophet is no more meteorologically accurate than our subconscience. And this is how it works.

Once a year, about the approach of the vernal equinox or the seedsman's catalogue, we wake up at six o'clock in the morning. This is an immediate warning and apprisement that something is adrift. Three hundred and sixty-four days in the year we wake, placidly enough, at seven-ten, ten minutes after the alarm clock has jangled. But on this particular day, whether it be the end of February or the middle of March, we wake with the old recognizable nostalgia. It is the last polyp or vestige of our anthropomorphic and primal self, trailing its pathetic little wisp of glory for the one day of the whole calendar. All the rest of the year we are the plodding percheron of commerce, patiently tugging our wain; but on that morning there wambles back, for the nonce, the pang of Eden. We wake at six o'clock; it is a blue and golden morning and we feel it imperative to get outdoors as quickly as possible. Not for an instant do we feel the customary respectable and sanctioned desire to kiss the sheets yet an hour or so. The traipsing, trolloping humour of spring is in our veins; we feel that we must be about felling an aurochs or a narwhal for breakfast. We leap into our clothes and hurry downstairs and out of

the front door and skirmish round the house to see and smell and feel.

It is spring. It is unmistakably spring, because the pewit bushes are budding and on yonder aspen we can hear a forsythia bursting into song. It is spring, when the feet of the floorwalker pain him and smoking-car windows have to be pried open with chisels. We skip lightheartedly round the house to see if those bobolink bulbs we planted are showing any signs yet, and discover the whisk brush that fell out of the window last November. And then the newsboy comes along the street and sees us prancing about and we feel sheepish and ashamed and hurry indoors again.

There may still be blizzards and frozen plumbings and tumbles on icy pavements, but when that morning of annunciation has come to us we know that winter is truly dead, even though his ghost may walk and gibber once or twice. The sweet urge of the new season has rippled up through the oceanic depths of our subconsciousness, and we are aware of the rising tide. Like Mr. Wordsworth we feel that we are wiser than we know. (Perhaps we have misquoted that, but let it stand.)

There are other troubles that spring brings us. We are pitifully ashamed of our ignorance of nature, and though we try to hide it we keep getting tripped up. About this time of year inquisitive persons are always asking us: "Have you heard

any song sparrows yet?" or "Are there any robins out your way?" or "When do the laburnums begin to nest out in Marathon?" Now we really can't tell these people our true feeling, which is that we do not believe in peeking in on the privacy of the laburnums or any other songsters. It seems to us really immodest to keep on spying on the birds in that way. And as for the bushes and trees, what we want to know is, How does one ever get to know them? How do you find out which is an alder and what is an elm? Or a narcissus and a hyacinth, does any one really know them apart? We think it's all a bluff. And jonquils. There was a nest of them on our porch, we are told, but we didn't think it any business of ours to bother them. Let nature alone and she'll let you alone.

But there is a pettifogging cult about that says you ought to know these things; moreover, children keep on asking one. We always answer at random and say it's a wagtail or a flowering shrike or a female magnolia. We were brought up in the country and learned that first principle of good manners, which is to let birds and flowers and animals go on about their own affairs without pestering them by asking them their names and addresses. Surely that's what Shakespeare meant by saying a rose by any other name will smell as sweet. We can enjoy a rose just as much as any one, even if we may think it's a hydrangea.

And then we are much too busy to worry about robins and bluebirds and other poultry of that sort. Of course, if we see one hanging about the lawn and it looks hungry we have decency enough to throw out a bone or something for it, but after all we have a lot of troubles of our own to bother about. We are short-sighted, too, and if we try to get near enough to see if it is a robin or only a bandanna some one has dropped, why either it flies away before we get there or it does turn out to be a bandanna or a clothespin. One of our friends kept on talking about a Baltimore oriole she had seen near our house, and described it as a beautiful yellowish fowl. We felt quite ashamed to be so ignorant, and when one day we thought we saw one near the front porch we left what we were doing, which was writing a check for the coal man, and went out to stalk it. After much manœuvring we got near, made a dash—and it was a banana peel. The oriole had gone back to Baltimore the day before.

We love to read about the birds and flowers and shrubs and insects in poetry, and it makes us very happy to know they are all round us, innocent little things like mice and centipedes and goldenrods (until hay-fever time), but as for prying into their affairs we simply won't do it.

A MESSAGE FOR BOONVILLE

WHEN corncob pipes went up from a nickel to six cents, smoking traditions tottered. That was a year or more ago, but one can still recall the indignation written on the faces of nicotine-soaked gaffers who had been buying cobs at a jitney ever since Washington used one to keep warm at Valley Forge. It was the supreme test of our determination to win the war; the price of Missouri meerschaums went up 20 per cent. and there was no insurrection.

Yesterday we went out to buy our annual corncob, and were agreeably surprised to learn that the price is still six cents; but our friend the tobacconist said that it may go up again soon. We took the treasure, gleaming yellow with fresh varnish, back to our kennel, and we are smoking it as we set down these words. A corncob is sadly hot and raw until it is well scoted, but the ultimate flavour is worth persecution.

The corncob pipes we always buy come from Boonville, Mo., and we don't see why we shouldn't blow a little whiff of affection and gratitude

toward that excellent town. Moreover, Boonville celebrated its centennial recently: it was founded in 1818. If the map is to be believed, it is on the southern bank of the Missouri River, which is there spanned by a very fine bridge; it is reached by two railroads (Missouri Pacific and M., K. and T.) and stands on a bluff 100 feet above the water. According to the two works of reference nearest to our desk, its population is either 4,252 or 4,377. Perhaps the former census omits the 125 men of the town who are so benighted as to smoke briars or clays.

Delightful town of Boonville, seat of Cooper County, you are well named. How great a boon you have conferred upon a troubled world! Long after more ambitious towns have faded in the memory of man your quiet and soothing gift to humanity will make your name blessed. I like to imagine your shady streets, drowsing in the summer sun, and the rural philosophers sitting on the verandas of your hotels or on the benches of Harley Park ("comprising fifteen acres"—New International Encyclopedia), looking out across the brown river and puffing clouds of sweet gray reek. Down by the livery stable on Main Street (there must be a livery stable on Main Street) I can see the old creaky, cane-bottomed chairs (with seats punctured by too much philosophy) tilted against the sycamore trees, ready for the after-

noon gossip and shag tobacco. I can imagine the small boys of Boonville fishing for catfish from the piers of the bridge or bathing down by the steamboat dock (if there is one), and yearning for the day when they, too, will be grown up and old enough to smoke corncobs.

What is the subtle magic of a corncob pipe? It is never as sweet or as mellow as a well-seasoned briar, and yet it has a fascination all its own. It is equally dear to those who work hard and those who loaf with intensity. When you put your nose to the blackened mouth of the hot cob its odour is quite different from that fragrance of the crusted wooden bowl. There is a faint bitterness in it, a sour, plaintive aroma. It is a pipe that seems to call aloud for the accompaniment of beer and earnest argument on factional political matters. It is also the pipe for solitary vigils of hard and concentrated work. It is the pipe that a man keeps in the drawer of his desk for savage hours of extra toil after the stenographer has powdered her nose and gone home.

A corncob pipe is a humble badge of philosophy, an evidence of tolerance and even humour. It requires patience and good cheer, for it is slow to "break in." Those who meditate bestial and brutal designs against the weak and innocent do not smoke it. Probably Hindenburg never saw one. Missouri's reputation for incredulity may be due

to the corncob habit. One who is accustomed to consider an argument over a burning nest of tobacco, with the smoke fuming upward in a placid haze, will not accept any dogma too immediately.

There is a singular affinity among those who smoke corncobs. A Missouri meerschaum whose bowl is browned and whose fibre stem is frayed and stringy with biting betrays a meditative and reasonable owner. He will have pondered all aspects of life and be equally ready to denounce any of them, but without bitterness. If you see a man on a street corner smoking a cob it will be safe to ask him to watch the baby a minute while you slip around the corner. You would even be safe in asking him to lend you a five. He will be safe, too, because he won't have it.

Think, therefore, of the charm of a town where corncob pipes are the chief industry. Think of them stacked up in bright yellow piles in the warehouse. Think of the warm sun and the wholesome sweetness of broad acres that have grown into the pith of the cob. Think of the bright-eyed Missouri maidens who have turned and scooped and varnished and packed them. Think of the airy streets and wide pavements of Boonville, and the corner drugstores with their shining soda fountains and grapejuice bottles. Think of sitting out on that bluff on a warm evening, watching the

broad shimmer of the river slipping down from the sunset, and smoking a serene pipe while the local flappers walk in the coolness wearing crisp, swaying gingham dresses. That's the kind of town we like to think about.

MAKING MARATHON SAFE FOR THE URCHIN

THE Urchin and I have been strolling about Marathon on Sunday mornings for more than a year, but not until the gasolineless Sabbaths supervened were we really able to examine the village and see what it is like. Previously we had been kept busy either dodging motors or admiring them as they sped by. Their rich dazzle of burnished enamel, the purring hum of their great tires, evokes applause from the Urchin. He is learning, as he watches those flashing chariots, that life truly is almost as vivid as the advertisements in the *Ladies' Home Journal*, where the shimmer of earthly pageant first was presented to him.

Marathon is a village so genteel and comely that the Urchin and I would like to have some pictures of it for future generations, particularly as we see it on an autumn morning when, as I say, the motors are kennelled and the landscape has ceased to vibrate. In the douce benignance of equinoctial sunshine we gaze about us with eyes of

inventory. Where my observation errs by too much sentiment the Urchin checks me by his cooler power of ratiocination.

Marathon is a suburban Xanadu gently caressed by the train service of the Cinder and Bloodshot. It may be recognized as an aristocratic and patrician stronghold by the fact that while luxuries are readily obtainable (for instance, banana splits, or the latest novel by Enoch A. Bennett), necessaries are had only by prayer and advowson. The drugstore will deliver ice cream to your very refrigerator, but it is impossible to get your garbage collected. The cook goes off for her Thursday evening in a taxi, but you will have to mend the roof, stanch the plumbing, and curry the furnace with your own hands. There are ten trains to take you to town of an evening, but only two to bring you home. Yet going to town is a luxury, coming home is a necessity. The supply of grapejuice seems almost unlimited, yet coal is to be had catch-as-catch-can.

Another proof that Marathon is patrician at heart is that nothing is known by its right name! The drugstore is a "pharmacy," Sunday is "the Sabbath," a house is a "residence," a debt is a "balance due on bill rendered." A girls' school is a "young ladies' seminary." A Marathon man is not drafted, he is "inducted into selective service." And the railway station has a porte cochère (with

the correct accent) instead of a carriage entrance. A furnace is (how erroneously!) called a "heater." Marathon people do not die—they "pass away." Even the cobbler, good fellow, has caught the trick; he calls his shop the "Italo-American Shoe Hospital."

This is an innocent masquerade! If Marathon prefers not to call a flivver a flivver, I shall not expostulate. And yet this quaint subterfuge should not be carried quite so far. Stone walls are made for sunny lounging; yet stone walls in Marathon are built with uneven vertical projections to discourage the sedentary. Nothing is more delightful than a dog; but there are no dogs in Marathon. They are all airedales or spaniels or mastiffs. If an ordinary dog should wag his tail up our street the airedales would cut him dead. Bless me, Nature herself has taken to the same insincerity. The landscape round Marathon is lovely, but it has itself well in hand. The hills all pretend to be gentle declivities. There is a beautiful little sheet of water, reflecting the trailery of willows, a green salute to the eye. In a robuster community it would be a swimming hole—but with us, an ornamental lake! Only in one spot has Nature forgotten herself and been so brusque and rough as to jut up a very sizable cliff. This is the loveliest thing in Marathon: sunlight and shadow break and angle in cubist magnificence among the

oddly veined knobs and prisms of brown stone. Yet this cliff or quarry is by common consent taboo among us. It is our indelicacy, our indecency. Such "residences" as are near modestly turn their kitchens toward it. Only the blacksmith and the gas tanks are hardy enough to face this nakedness of Mother Earth—they, and excellent Pat Lemon, Marathon's humblest and blackest citizen, who contemplates that rugged and honest beauty as he tills his garden on the land abandoned by squeamish burghers. That is our Aceldama, our Potter's Field, only approached by the athletic, who keep their eyes from Nature's indiscretion by vigorous sets of tennis in the purple shadow of the cliff.

Life is queerly inverted in Marathon. Nature has been so bullied and repressed that she fawns about us timidly. No well-conducted suburban shrubbery would think of assuming autumn tints before the ladies have got into their fall fashions. Indeed none of our chaste trees will even shed their leaves while any one is watching; and they crouch modestly in the shade of our massive garages. They have been taught their place. In Marathon it is a worse sin to have your lawn uncut than to have your books or your hair uncut. I have been aware of indignant eyes because I let my back garden run wild. And yet I flatter myself it was not mere sloth. No! I want the Urchin to

see what this savage, tempestuous world is like. What preparation for life is a village where Nature comes to heel like a spaniel? When a thunderstorm disorganizes our electric lights for an hour or so we feel it a personal affront. Let my rearward plot be a deep-tangled wildwood where the happy Urchin may imagine something more ferocious lurking than a posse of radishes. Indeed, I hardly know whether Marathon is a safe place to bring up a child. How can he learn the horrors of drink in a village where there is no saloon? Or the sadness of the seven deadly sins where there is no movie? Or deference to his betters where the chauffeurs, in their withered leather legs, drive limousines to the drugstore to buy expensive cigars, while their employers walk to the station puffing briar pipes?

I had been hoping that the war would knock some of this topsy-turvy nonsense out of us. Maybe it has. Sometimes I see on the faces of our commuters the unaccustomed agitation of thought. At least we still have the grace to call ourselves a suburb, and not (what we fancy ourselves) a superurb. But I don't like the pretense that runs like a jarring note through the music of our life. Why is it that those who are doing the work must pretend they are not doing it; and those not doing the work pretend that they are? I see that the motor messenger girls who drive high-

powered cars wear Sam Browne belts and heavy-soled boots, whereas the stalwart coloured wenches who labour along the tracks of the Cinder and Bloodshot console themselves with flimsy waists and light slippers. (A fact!) By and by the Urchin will notice these things. And I don't want him to grow up the kind of chap who, instead of running to catch a train, loiters gracefully to the station and waits to be caught.

THE SMELL OF SMELLS

I SMELT it this morning—I wonder if you know the smell I mean?

It had rained hard during the night, and trees and bushes twinkled in the sharp early sunshine like ballroom chandeliers. As soon as I stepped out of doors I caught that faint but unmistakable musk in the air; that dim, warm sweetness. It was the smell of summer, so wholly different from the crisp tang of spring.

It is a drowsy, magical waft of warmth and fragrance. It comes only when the leaves and vegetation have grown to a certain fullness and juice, and when the sun bends in his orbit near enough to draw out all the subtle vapours of field and woodland. It is a smell that rarely if ever can be discerned in the city. It needs the wider air of the unhampered earth for its circulation and play.

I don't know just why, but I associate that peculiar aroma of summer with woodpiles and barnyards. Perhaps because in the area of a farmyard the sunlight is caught and focussed and glows with its fullest heat and radiance. And it is in the

grasp of the relentless sun that growing things yield up their innermost vitality and emanate their fragrant essence. I have seen fields of tobacco under a hot sun that smelt as blithe as a room thick with blue Havana smoke. I remember a pile of birch logs, heaped up behind a barn in Pike County, where that mellow richness of summer flowed and quivered like a visible exhalation in the air. It is the goodly soul of earth, rendering her health and sweetness to her master, the sun.

Everyone, I suppose, who is a fancier of smells, knows this blithe perfume of the summer air that is so pleasant to the nostril almost any fine forenoon from mid-June until August. It steals pungently through the blue sparkle of the morning, fading away toward noon when the moistness is dried out. But when one first issues from the house at breakfast time it is at its highest savour. Irresistibly it suggests worms, and a tin can with the lid jaggedly bent back, and a pitchfork turning up the earth behind the cow stable. Fishing was first invented when Adam smelt that odour in the air.

The first fishing morning—can't you imagine it! Has no one ever celebrated it in verse or oils? The world all young and full of unmitigated sweetness; the Garden of Eden bespangled with the early dew; Adam scrabbling up a fistful of worms and hooking them on a bent thorn and a line of twisted pampas grass; hurrying down to

the branch or the creek or the bayou or whatever it may have been; sitting down on a brand-new stump that the devil had put there to tempt him; throwing out his line; sitting there in the sun dreaming and brooding. . . .

And then a tug, a twitch, a flurry in the clear water of Eden, a pull, a splash, and the First Fish lay on the grass at Adam's foot. Can you imagine his sensations? How he yelled to Eve to come—look—see, and how annoyed he was because she called out she was busy. . . .

Probably it was in that moment that all the bickerings and back-talk of husbands and wives originated; when Adam called to Eve to come and look at his First Fish while it was still silver and vivid in its living colours; and Eve answered she was busy. In that moment were born the men's clubs and the women's clubs and the pinochle parties and being detained at the office and Kelly pool and all the other devices and stratagems that keep men and women from taking their amusements together.

Well, I didn't mean to go back to the Garden of Eden; I just wanted to say that summer is here again, even though the almanac doesn't vouch for it until the 21st. Those of you who are fond of smells, spread your nostrils about breakfast time to-morrow morning and see if you detect it.

A JAPANESE BACHELOR

THE first obligation of one who lives by writing is to write what editors will buy. In so doing, how often one laments that one cannot write exactly what happens. Suppose I were to try it—for once!

I have been lying on the bed—where the landlady has put a dark blue spread, instead of the white one, because I drop my tobacco ashes—smoking, and thinking about a new friend I met to-day. His name is Kenko, a Japanese bachelor of the Fourteenth Century, who wrote a little book of musings which has been translated under the title *The Miscellany of a Japanese Priest.* His candid reflections are those of a shrewd, learned, humane and somewhat misogynist mind. I have been lying on the bed because his book, like all books that make one ponder deeply on human destiny, causes that feeling of mind-sickness, that swimming pain of the mental faculties—or is it caused by too much strong tobacco?

My acquaintance with Kenko began only last night, when I sat in bed reading Mr. Raymond Weaver's very pleasant article about him in a

recent *Bookman*. My last act before turning out the light was to lay the magazine on the table, open at Mr. Weaver's essay, to remind me to get a copy of Kenko the first thing this morning. Happily to-day was Saturday. I don't know what I should have done if it had been Sunday. I felt that I could not wait another day without owning that book. I suspected it was a good deal in the mood of another bachelor, an Anglo-American Caleb of to-day—Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith, whose whimsical *Trivia* belongs on the same shelf.

This morning I tried to argue myself out of the decision. It may be a very expensive book, I thought; it may cost two or three dollars; I have been spending a lot of money lately, and I certainly ought to buy some new undershirts. Moreover, this has been a bad week; I have never written those paragraphs I promised a certain editor, and I haven't paid the rent yet. Why not try to find the book at a library? But I knew the only library where I would have any chance of finding Kenko would be the big pile at Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street, and I could not bear the thought of having to read that book without smoking. I felt instinctively (from what Mr. Weaver had written) that it was the kind of book that requires a pipe.

Well, I thought, I won't decide this too hastily; I'll walk down to the post office (four blocks)

and make up my mind on the way. I knew already, however, that if I didn't go downtown for that book it would bother me all day and ruin my work.

I walked down to the post office (to mail to an editor a sonnet I thought fairly well of) saying to myself: That book is imported from England, it may be a big book, it may even cost four dollars. How much better to exhibit the stoic tenacity of all great men, go back to my hall bedroom (which I was temporarily occupying) and concentrate on matters in hand. What right, I said, has a Buddhist recluse, born either in 1281 or 1283, to harass me so? But I knew in my heart that the matter was already decided. I walked back to the corner of Hallbedroom Street, and stood vacillating at the newsstand, pretending to glance over the papers. But across six centuries the insistent ghost of Kenko had me in its grip. Annoyed, and with a sense of chagrin, I hurried to the subway.

In the dimly lit vestibule of the subway car, a boy of sixteen or so sat on an up-ended suitcase, plunged in a book. I can never resist the temptation to try to see what books other people are reading. This innocent curiosity has led me into many rudenesses, for I am short-sighted and have to stare very close to make out the titles. And usually the people who read books on trolleys, subways, and ferries are women. How often I have

stalked them warily, trying to identify the volume without seeming too intrusive. That weakness deserves an essay in itself. It has led me into surprising adventures. But in this case my quarry was easy. The lad—I judged him a boarding school boy going back to school after the holidays—was so absorbed in his reading that it was easy to thrust my face over his shoulder and see the running head on the page—*The Light That Failed.*

I left the subway at Pennsylvania Station. Just to appease my conscience, I stopped in at the agreeable Cadmus bookshop on Thirty-third Street to see if by any chance they might have a second-hand copy of Kenko. But I knew they wouldn't; it is not the kind of book at all likely to be found second-hand. I tarried here long enough to smoke one cigarette and pay my devoirs to the noble profession of second-hand bookselling. I even thought, a little wildly, of buying a copy of *The Monk*, by M. G. Lewis, which I saw there. So does the frenzy rage when once you unleash it. But I decided to be content with paying my devoirs to the proprietor, a friend of mine, and not go on (as the soldier does in Hood's lovely pun) to devour my pay. I hurried off to the office of the Oxford University Press, Kenko's publishers.

It should be stated, however, that owing to some confusion of doors I got by mistake into the

reception room of the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Billiard Table Company, which is on the same corridor as the salesroom of the Oxford Press. It was a pleasant reception room, not very bookish in aspect, but in my agitation I was too eager to feel surprised by the large billiard table in the offing. I somewhat startled a young man at an adding machine by demanding, in a husky voice, a copy of *The Miscellany of a Japanese Priest.* I was rather nervous by this time, lest for some reason I should not be able to buy a copy of Kenko. I feared the publishers might be angry with me for not having made a round of the bookstores first. The young man saw that I was chalking the wrong cue, and forwarded me.

In the office of the Oxford Press I met a very genial reception. I had been, as I say, apprehensive lest they should refuse to sell me the book; or perhaps they might not have a copy. I wondered what credentials I could offer to override their scruples. I had made up my mind to tell them, if they demurred, that I had once published an essay to prove that the best book for reading in bed is the General Catalogue of the Oxford University Press. This is quite true. It is a delightful compilation of several thousand pages, on India paper. But to my pleasant surprise the Oxonians seemed not at all surprised at the sudden appearance of one asking, in a voice a little shaken with emotion, for

a copy of the *Miscellany*. Mr. Campion and Mr. Krause, who greeted me, were kindness itself.

"Oh, yes," they said, "we have a copy." And in a minute it lay before me. One of those little green and gold volumes in the Oxford Library of Prose and Poetry. "How much?" I said. "A dollar forty." I paid it joyfully. It is a good price for a book. Once I wrote a book myself that sells (when it does sell) at that figure. When I was at Oxford I used to buy the O. L. P. P. books for (I think) half a crown. In 1917 they were listed at a dollar. Now $1.40. But I fear Kenko's estate doesn't get the advantage of increased royalties.

The first thing to do was to find a place to read the book. My club was fifteen blocks away. The smoking room of the Pennsylvania Station, where I have done much reading, was three long blocks. But I must dip into Kenko immediately. Down in the hallway I found a shoeshining stand, with a bowl of indirect light above it. The artist was busy in the barber shop near by. Admirable opportunity. I mounted the throne and fell to. The first thing I saw was a quaint Japanese woodcut of a buxom maiden washing garments in a rapidly purling stream. She was treading out a petticoat with her bare feet, presumably on a flat stone. In a black storm-cloud above a willow tree a bearded supernatural being, with hands spread in humorous deprecation, gazes down half pleased,

half horrified. And the caption is, "Did not the fairy Kumé lose his supernatural powers when he saw the white legs of a girl washing clothes?" Yet be not dismayed. Kenko is no George Moore.

By and bye the shoeshiner came out and found me reading. He was apologetic. "I didn't know you were here," he said. "Sorry to keep you waiting." Fortunately my shoes needed shining, as they generally do. He shined them, and I still sat reading. He was puzzled, and tried to make out the title of the book. At that moment I was reading:

> One morning after a beautiful snowfall I sent a letter to a friend's house about something I wished to say, but said nothing at all about the snow. And in his reply he wrote: "How can I listen to a man so base that his pen in writing did not make the least reference to the snow! Your honourable way of expressing yourself I exceedingly regret." How amusing was this answer!

The shoeshiner was now asking me whether anything was wrong with the polish he had put on my boots, so I thought it best to leave.

In the earlier pages of Kenko's book there are a number of allusions to the agreeableness of intercourse with friends, so I went into a near by restaurant to telephone to a man whom I wished to know better. He said that he would be happy to meet me at ten minutes after twelve. That left over half an hour. I felt an immediate necessity to

tell someone about Kenko, so I made my way to Mr. Nichols's delightful bookshop (which has an open fire) on Thirty-third Street. I showed the book to Mr. Nichols, and we had a pleasant talk, in the course of which he showed me the five facsimile volumes of Dickens's Christmas books, which he had issued. In particular, he read aloud to me the magnificent description of the boiling kettle in the first "Chirp" of *The Cricket on the Hearth*, and pointed out to me how Dickens fell into rhyme in describing the song of the kettle. This passage Mr. Nichols read to me, standing in front of his fire, in a very musical and sympathetic tone of voice, which pleased me exceedingly. I was strongly tempted to buy the five little books, and wished I had known of them before Christmas. With a brutal effort at last I pulled out my watch, and found it was a quarter after twelve.

I met my friend at his office, and we walked up Fourth Avenue in a flush of sunshine. From Twenty-fourth to Forty-second Street we discussed the habits of English poets visiting this country. At the club we got on to Bolshevism, and he told me how a bookseller on Lexington Avenue, whose shop is frequented by very outspoken radicals, had told him that one of these had said, "The time is coming, and not far away, when the gutters in front of your shop will run with blood as they did in Petrograd." I thought of some

recent bomb outrages in Philadelphia and did not laugh. With such current problems before us, I felt a little embarrassed about turning the talk back to so many centuries to Kenko, but finally I got it there. My friend ate chicken hash and tea; I had kidneys and bacon, and cocoa with whipped cream. We both had a coffee éclair. We parted with mutual regret, and I went back to the Hallbedroom Street, intending to do some work.

Of course you know that I didn't do it. I lit the gas stove, and sat down to read Kenko. I wished I were a recluse, living somewhere near a plum tree and a clear running water, leisurely penning maxims for posterity. I read about his frugality, his love of the moon and a little music, his somewhat embittered complaints against the folly of men who spend their lives in rushing about swamped in petty affairs, and the sad story of the old priest who was attacked by a goblin-cat when he came home late at night from a pleasant evening spent in capping verses. I read with special pleasure his seven Self-Congratulations, in which he records seven occasions when he felt that he had really done himself justice. The first of these was when he watched a man riding horseback in a reckless fashion; he predicted that the man would come a cropper, and he did so. The next four self-congratulations refer to times when his knowledge

of literary and artistic matters enabled him to place an unfamiliar quotation or assign a painted tablet to the right artist. One tells how he was able to find a man in a crowd when everyone else had failed. And the last and most amusing is an anecdote of a court lady who tried to inveigle him into a flirtation with her maid by sending the latter, richly dressed and perfumed, to sit very close to him when he was at the temple. Kenko congratulates himself on having been adamant. He was no Pepys.

I thought of trying to set down a similar list of self-congratulations for myself. Alas, the only two I could think of were having remembered a telephone number, the memorandum of which I had lost; and having persuaded a publisher to issue a novel which was a great success. (Not written by me, let me add.)

I found my friend Kenko a rather disturbing companion. His condemnation of our busy, racketing life is so damned conclusive! Having recently added to my family, I was distressed by his section "Against Leaving Any Descendants." He seems to be devoid of the sentiment of ancestor worship and sacredness of family continuity which we have been taught to associate with the Oriental. And yet there is always a current of suspicion in one's mind that he is not really revealing his inmost heart. When a bachelor in his

late fifties tells us how glad he is never to have had a son, we begin to taste sour grapes.

I went out about six o'clock, and was thrilled by a shaving of shining new moon in the cold blue winter sky—"the sky with its terribly cold clear moon, which none care to watch, is simply heart-breaking," says Kenko. As I walked up Broadway I turned back for another look at the moon, and found it hidden by the vast bulk of a hotel. Kenko would have had some caustic remark for that. I went into the Milwaukee Lunch for supper. They had just baked some of their delicious fresh bran muffins, still hot from the oven. I had two of them, sliced and buttered, with a pot of tea. Kenko lay on the table, and the red-headed philosopher who runs the lunchroom spotted him. I have always noticed that "plain men" are vastly curious about books. They seem to suspect that there is some occult power in them, some mystery that they would like to grasp. My friend, who has the bearing of a prizefighter, but the heart of an amiable child, came over and picked up the book. He sat down at the table with me and looked at it. I was a little doubtful how to explain matters, for I felt that it was the kind of book he would not be likely to care for. He began spelling it out loud, rather laboriously—

Section 1. Well! Being born into this world there are, I suppose, many aims which we may strive to attain.

To my surprise he showed the greatest enthusiasm. So much so that I ordered another pair of bran muffins, which I did not really want, so that he might have more time for reading Kenko.

"Who was this fellow?" he asked.

"He was a Jap," I said, "lived a long time ago. He was mighty thick with the Emperor, and after the Emperor died he went to live by himself in the country, and became a priest, and wrote down his thoughts."

"I see," said my friend. "Just put down whatever came into his head, eh?"

"That's it. All his ideas about the queer things a fellow runs into in life, you know, little bits of philosophy."

I was a little afraid of using that word "philosophy," but I couldn't think of anything else to say. It struck my friend very pleasantly.

"That's it," he said, "philosophy. Just as you say, now, he went off by himself and put things down the way they come to him. Philosophy. Sure. Say, that's a good kind of book. I like that kind of thing. I have a lot of books at home, you know. I get home about nine o'clock, and I most always read a bit before I go to bed."

How I yearned to know what books they were, but it seemed rude to question him.

He dipped into Kenko again, and I wondered

whether courtesy demanded that I should order another pot of tea.

"Say, would you like to do me a favour?"

"Sure thing," I said.

"When you get through with that book, pass it over, will you? That's the kind of thing I've been wanting. Just some little thoughts, you know, something short. I've got a lot of books at home."

His big florid face gleamed with friendly earnestness.

"Sure thing," I said. "Just as soon as I've finished it you shall have it." I wanted to ask whether he would reciprocate by lending me one of his own books, which would give me some clue to his tastes; but again I felt obscurely that he would not understand my curiosity.

As I went out he called to me again from where he stood by the shining coffee boiler. "Don't forget, will you?" he said. "When you're through, just pass it over."

I promised faithfully, and to-morrow evening I shall take the book in to him. I honestly hope he'll enjoy it. I walked up the bright wintry street, and wondered what Kenko would have said to the endless flow of taxicabs, the elevators and subways, the telephones and telegraph offices, the newsstands and especially the plate-glass windows of florists. He would have had some urbane, cynical and delightfully disillusioning remarks to of-

fer. And, as Mr. Weaver so shrewdly says, how he would enjoy "The Way of All Flesh"!

I came back to Hallbedroom Street, and set down these few meditations. There is much more I would like to say, but the partitions in hall bedrooms are thin, and the lady in the next room thumps on the wall if I keep the typewriter going after ten o'clock.

TWO DAYS WE CELEBRATE

IF WE were asked (we have not been asked) to name a day the world ought to celebrate and does not, we would name the 16th of May. For on that day, in the year 1763, James Boswell first met Dr. Samuel Johnson.

This great event, which enriched the world with one of the most vivid panoramas of human nature known to man, happened in Tom Davies's bookshop in Covent Garden. Mr. and Mrs. Davies were friends of the Doctor, who frequently visited their shop. Of them Boswell remarks quaintly that though they had been on the stage for many years, they "maintained an uniform decency of character." The shop seems to have been a charming place: one went there not merely to buy books, but also to have a cup of tea in the back parlour. It is sad to think that though we have been hanging round bookshops for a number of years, we have never yet met a bookseller who invited us into the private office for a quiet cup. Wait a moment, though, we are forgetting Doctor Rosenbach, the famous bookseller of Philadelphia. But his collations, held in amazed memory by

many editioneers, rarely descend to anything so humble as tea. One recalls a confused glamour of ortolans, trussed guinea-hens, strawberries reclining in a bowl carved out of solid ice, and what used to be known as vintages. It is a pity that Doctor Johnson died too soon to take lunch with Doctor Rosenbach.

"At last, on Monday, the 16th of May," says Boswell, "when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back parlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies, having perceived him through the glass door, announced his awful approach to me. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated." The volatile Boswell may be forgiven his agitation. We also would have trembled not a little. Boswell was only twenty-two, and probably felt that his whole life and career hung upon the great man's mood. But embarrassment is a comely emotion for a young man in the face of greatness; and the Doctor was speedily put in a good humour by an opportunity to utter his favourite pleasantry at the expense of the Scotch. "I do, indeed, come from Scotland," cried Boswell, after Davies had let the cat out of the bag; "but I cannot help it." "That, sir," said Doctor Johnson, "is what a great many of your countrymen cannot help."

The great book that dated from that meeting in Davies's back parlour has become one of the most intimately cherished possessions of the race. One finds its admirers and students scattered over the globe. No man who loves human nature in all its quirks and pangs, seasoned with bluff honesty and the genuineness of a cliff or a tree, can afford to step into a hearse until he has made it his own. And it is a noteworthy illustration of the biblical saying that whosoever will rule, let him be a servant. Boswell made himself the servant of Johnson, and became one of the masters of English literature.

It used to annoy us to hear Karl Rosner referred to as "the Kaiser's Boswell." For to *boswellize* (which is a verb that has gone into our dictionaries) means not merely to transcribe faithfully the acts and moods and import of a man's life; it implies also that the man so delineated be a good man and a great. Horace Traubel was perhaps a Boswell; but Rosner, never.

It is pleasant to know that Boswell was not merely a kind of animated notebook. He was a droll, vain, erring, bibulous, warm-hearted creature, a good deal of a Pepys, in fact, with all the Pepysian vices and virtues. Mr. A. Edward Newton's *Amenities of Book Collecting* makes Boswell very human to us. How jolly it is to learn that Jamie (like many lesser fry since)

wrote press notices about himself. Here is one of his own blurbs, which we quote from Mr. Newton's book:

> Boswell, the author, is a most excellent man: he is of an ancient family in the west of Scotland, upon which he values himself not a little. At his nativity there appeared omens of his future greatness. His parts are bright, and his education has been good. He has travelled in post chaises miles without number. He is fond of seeing much of the world. He eats of every good dish, especially apple pie. He drinks Old Hock. He has a very fine temper. He is somewhat of a humorist and a little tinctured with pride. He has a good manly countenance, and he owns himself to be amorous. He has infinite vivacity, yet is observed at times to have a melancholy cast. He is rather fat than lean, rather short than tall, rather young than old. His shoes are neatly made, and he never wears spectacles.

This brings the excellent Boswell very close to us indeed: he might almost be a member of the Authors' League. "Especially apple pie," bless his heart!

When we said that Boswell was a kind of Pepys, we fell by chance into a happy comparison. Not only by his volatile errors was he of the tribe of Samuel, but in his outstanding character by which he becomes of importance to posterity—that of one of the great diarists. Now there is no human failing upon which we look with more

affectionate lenience than that of keeping a diary. All of us, in our pilgrimage through the difficult thickets of this world, have moods and moments when we have to fall back on ourselves for the only complete understanding and absolution we will ever find. In such times, how pleasant it is to record our emotions and misgivings in the sure and secret pages of some privy notebook; and how entertaining to read them again in later years! Doctor Johnson himself advised Bozzy to keep a journal, though he little suspected to what use it would be put. The cynical will say that he did so in order that Bozzy would have less time to pester him, but we believe his advice was sincere. It must have been, for the Doctor kept one himself, of which more in a moment.

"He recommended to me," Boswell says, "to keep a journal of my life, full and unreserved. He said it would be a very good exercise and would yield me great satisfaction when the particulars were faded from my remembrance. He counselled me to keep it private, and said I might surely have a friend who would burn it in case of my death."

Happily it was not burned. The Great Doctor never seemed so near to me as the other day when I saw a little notebook, bound in soft brown leather and interleaved with blotting paper, in which Bozzy's busy pen had jotted down memoranda of his talks with his friend, while they were

still echoing in his mind. From this notebook (which must have been one of many) the paragraphs were transferred practically unaltered into the Life. This superb treasure, now owned by Mr. Adam of Buffalo, almost makes one hear the Doctor's voice; and one imagines Boswell sitting up at night with his candle, methodically recording the remarks of the day. The first entry was dated September 22, 1777, so Bozzy must have carried it in his pocket when Doctor Johnson and he were visiting Doctor Taylor in Ashbourne. It was during this junket that Doctor Johnson tried to pole the large dead cat over Doctor Taylor's dam, an incident that Boswell recorded as part of his "Flemish picture of my friend." It was then also that Mrs. Killingley, mistress of Ashbourne's leading inn, The Green Man, begged Boswell "to name the house to his extensive acquaintance." Certainly Bozzy's acquaintance was to be far more extensive than good Mrs. Killingley ever dreamed. It was he who "named the house" to me, and for this reason The Green Man profited in fourpence worth of cider, 134 years later.

There is another day we have vowed to commemorate, by drinking great flaggonage of tea, and that is the 18th of September, Doctor Johnson's birthday. The Great Cham needs no champion; his speech and person have become part of our common heritage. Yet the extraordinary scenario

in which Boswell filmed him for us has attained that curious estate of great literature the characteristic of which is that every man imagines he has read it, though he may never have opened its pages. It is like the historic landmark of one's home town, which foreigners from overseas come to study, but which the denizen has hardly entered. It is like Niagara Falls: we have a very fair mental picture of the spectacle and little zeal to visit the uproar itself. And so, though we all use Doctor Johnson's sharply stamped coinages, we generally are too lax about visiting the mint.

But we will never cease to pray that every honest man should study Boswell. There are many who have topped the rise of human felicity in that book: when reading it they feel the tide of intellect brim the mind with a unique fullness of satisfaction. It is not a mere commentary on life: it *is* life—it fills and floods every channel of the brain. It is a book that men make a hobby of, as golf or billiards. To know it is a liberal education. I could have understood Germany yearning to invade England in order to annex Boswell's Johnson. There would have been some sense in that.

What is the average man's conception of Doctor Johnson? We think of a huge ungainly creature, slovenly of dress, addicted to tea, the author of a dictionary and the centre of a tavern coterie. We

think of him prefacing bluff and vehement remarks with "Sir," and having a knack for demolishing opponents in boisterous argument. All of which is passing true, just as is our picture of the Niagara we have never seen; but how it misses the inner tenderness and tormented virtue of the man!

So it is refreshing sometimes to turn away from Boswell to those passages where the good old Doctor has revealed himself with his own hand. The letter to Chesterfield is too well known for comment. But no less noble, and not nearly so well known, is the preface to the Dictionary. How moving it is in its sturdy courage, its strong grasp of the tools of expression. In every line one feels the weight and push of a mind that had behind it the full reservoir of language, particularly the Latin. There is the same sense of urgent pressure that one feels in watching a strong stream backed up behind a dam:

> I look with pleasure on my book, however defective, and deliver it to the world with the spirit of a man that has endeavoured well. That it will immediately become popular I have not promised to myself: a few wild blunders, and risible absurdities, from which no work of such multiplicity was ever free, may for a time furnish folly with laughter, and harden ignorance in contempt, but useful diligence will at last prevail, and there never can be wanting some who distinguish desert; who will

consider that no dictionary of a living tongue ever can be perfect, since while it is hastening to publication, some words are budding, and some falling away; that a whole life cannot be spent upon syntax and etymology, and that even a whole life would not be sufficient; that he, whose design includes whatever language can express, must often speak of what he does not understand; that a writer will sometimes be hurried by eagerness to the end, and sometimes faint with weariness under a task, which Scaliger compares to the labours of the anvil and the mine; that what is obvious is not always known, and what is known is not always present; that sudden fits of inadvertency will surprise vigilance, slight avocations will seduce attention, and casual eclipses of the mind will darken learning; and that the writer shall often in vain trace his memory at the moment of need, for that which yesterday he knew with intuitive readiness, and which will come uncalled into his thoughts to-morrow.

I know no better way of celebrating Doctor Johnson's birthday than by quoting a few passages from his "Prayers and Meditations," jotted down during his life in small notebooks and given shortly before his death to a friend. No one understands the dear old Doctor unless he remembers that his spirit was greatly perplexed and harassed by sad and disordered broodings. The bodily twitchings and odd gestures which attracted so much attention as he rolled about the streets were symptoms of painful twitchings and gestures

within. A great part of his intense delight in convivial gatherings, in conversation and the dinner table, was due to his eagerness to be taken out of himself. One fears that his solitary hours were very often tragic.

There were certain dates which Doctor Johnson almost always commemorated in his private notebook—his birthday, the date of his wife's death, the Easter season and New Year's. In these pathetic little entries one sees the spirit that was dogmatic and proud among men abasing itself in humility and pouring out the generous tenderness of an affectionate nature. In these moments of contrition small peccadilloes took on tragic importance in his mind. Rising late in the morning and the untidy state of his papers seemed unforgivable sins. There is hardly any more moving picture in the history of mankind than that of the rugged old Doctor pouring out his innocent petitions for greater strength in ordering his life and bewailing his faults of sluggishness, indulgence at table and disorderly thoughts. Let us begin with his entry on September 18, 1760, his fifty-second birthday:

RESOLVED, D. j.
To combat notions of obligation.
To apply to study.
To reclaim imaginations.
To consult the resolves on Tetty's [his wife's] coffin.

To rise early.
To study religion.
To go to church.
To drink less strong liquors.
To keep a journal.
To oppose laziness by doing what is to be done to-morrow.
Rise as early as I can.
Send for books for history of war.
Put books in order.
Scheme of life.

The very human feature of these little notes is that the same good resolutions appear year after year. Thus, four years after the above, we find him writing:

Sept. 18, 1764.

This is my 56th birthday, the day on which I have concluded 55 years.

I have outlived many friends. I have felt many sorrows. I have made few improvements. Since my resolution formed last Easter, I have made no advancement in knowledge or in goodness; nor do I recollect that I have endeavoured it. I am dejected, but not hopeless.

I resolve,

To study the Scriptures; I hope, in the original languages. Six hundred and forty verses every Sunday will nearly comprise the Scriptures in a year.

To read good books; to study theology.

To treasure in my mind passages for recollection.

To rise early; not later than six, if I can; I hope sooner, but as soon as I can.

To keep a journal, both of employment and of expenses. To keep accounts.

To take care of my health by such means as I have designed.

To set down at night some plan for the morrow.

To-morrow I purpose to regulate my room.

At Easter, 1765, he confesses sadly that he often lies abed until two in the afternoon; which, after all, was not so deplorable, for he usually went to bed very late. Boswell has spoken of "the unseasonable hour at which he had habituated himself to expect the oblivion of repose." On New Year's Day, 1767, he prays: "Enable me, O Lord, to use all enjoyments with due temperance, preserve me from unseasonable and immoderate sleep." Two years later than this he writes:

I am not yet in a state to form many resolutions; I purpose and hope to rise early in the morning at eight, and by degrees at six; eight being the latest hour to which bedtime can be properly extended; and six the earliest that the present system of life requires.

One of the most pathetic of his entries is the following, on September 18, 1768:

This day it came into my mind to write the history of my melancholy. On this I purpose to deliberate; I know not whether it may not too much disturb me.

From time to time there have been stupid or malicious people who have said that Johnson's marriage with a homely woman twenty years older than himself was not a love match. For instance, Mr. E. W. Howe, of Atchison, Kan., in most respects an amiable and well-conducted philosopher, uttered in *Howe's Monthly* (May, 1918) the following words, which (I hope) he will ever regret:

> I have heard that when a young man he (Johnson) married an ugly and vulgar old woman for her money, and that his taste was so bad that he worshiped her.

Against this let us set what Johnson wrote in his notebook on March 28, 1770:

> This is the day on which, in 1752, I was deprived of poor dear Tetty. When I recollect the time in which we lived together, my grief of her departure is not abated; and I have less pleasure in any good that befalls me, because she does not partake it. On many occasions, I think what she would have said or done. When I saw the sea at Brighthelmstone, I wished for her to have seen it with me. But with respect to her, no rational wish is now left but that we may meet at last where the mercy of God shall make us happy, and perhaps make us instrumental to the happiness of each other. It is now 18 years.

Let us end the memorandum with a less solemn note. On Good Friday, 1779, he and Boswell went

to church together. When they returned the good old Doctor sat down to read the Bible, and he says, "I gave Boswell *Les Pensées de Pascal*, that he might not interrupt me." Of this very copy Boswell says: "I preserve the book with reverence." I wonder who has it now?

So let us wish Doctor Johnson many happy returns of the day, sure that as long as paper and ink and eyesight preserve their virtue he will bide among us, real and living and endlessly loved.

THE URCHIN AT THE ZOO

I DON'T know just what urchins think about; neither do they, perhaps; but presumably by the time they're twenty-eight months old they must have formed some ideas as to what is possible and what isn't. And therefore it seemed to the Urchin's curator sound and advisable to take him out to the Zoo one Sunday afternoon just to suggest to his delightful mind that nothing is impossible in this curious world.

Of course, the amusing feature of such expeditions is that it is always the adult who is astounded, while the child takes things blandly for granted. You or I can watch a tiger for hours and not make head or tail of it—in a spiritual sense, that is—whereas an urchin simply smiles with rapture, isn't the least amazed, and wants to stroke the "nice pussy."

It was a soft spring afternoon, the garden was thronged with visitors and all the indoor animals seemed to be wondering how soon they would be let out into their open-air inclosures. We filed through the wicket gate and the Urchin disdained

the little green go-carts ranked for hire. He preferred to navigate the Zoo on his own white-gaitered legs. You might as well have expected Adam on his first tour of Eden to ride in a palanquin.

The Urchin entered the Zoo much in the frame of mind that must have been Adam's on that original tour of inspection. He had been told he was going to the Zoo, but that meant nothing to him. He saw by the aspect of his curators that he was to have a good time, and loyally he was prepared to exult over whatever might come his way. The first thing he saw was a large boulder—it is set up as a memorial to a former curator of the garden. "Ah," thought the Urchin, "this is what I have been brought here to admire." With a shout of glee he ran to it. "See stone," he cried. He is an enthusiast concerning stones. He has a small cardboard box of pebbles, gathered from the walks of a city square, which is very precious to him. And this magnificent big pebble, he evidently thought, was the marvellous thing he had come to examine. His custodians, far more anxious than he to feast their eyes upon lions and tigers, had hard work to lure him away. He crouched by the boulder, appraising its hugeness, and left it with the gratified air of one who has extracted the heart out of a surprising and significant experience.

The next adventure was a robin, hopping on the

lawn. Every child is familiar with robins, which play a leading part in so much Mother Goose mythology, so the Urchin felt himself greeting an old friend. "See Robin Redbreast!" he exclaimed, and tried to climb the low wire fence that bordered the path. The robin hopped discreetly underneath a bush, uncertain of our motives.

Now, as I have no motive but to attempt to record the truth, it is my duty to set down quite frankly that I believe the Urchin showed more enthusiasm over the stone and the robin than over any of the amazements that succeeded them. I suppose the reason for that is plain. These two objects had some understandable relation with his daily life. His small mind—we call a child's mind "small" simply by habit; perhaps it is larger than ours, for it can take in almost anything without effort—possessed well-known classifications into which the big stone and the robin fitted comfortably and naturally. But what can a child say to an ostrich or an elephant? It simply smiles and passes on. Thereby showing its superiority to some of our most eminent thinkers. They, confronted by something the like of which they had never seen before—shall we say a League of Nations or Bolshevism?—burst into shrill screams of panic abuse and flee the precinct! How much wiser the level-headed Urchin! Confronting the elephant, certainly an appalling sight to so small a mortal,

he looked at the curator, who was carrying him on one shoulder, and said with an air of one seeking gently to reassure himself, "Elphunt won't come after Junior."

It was delightful to see the Urchin endeavour to bring some sense of order into this amazing place by his classification of the strange sights that surround him. He would not confess himself staggered by anything. At his first glimpse of the emu he cried ecstatic, "Look, there's a——," and paused, not knowing what on earth to call it. Then rapidly to cover up his ignorance he pointed confidently to a somewhat similar fowl and said sagely, "And there's another!" The curious moth-eaten and shabby appearance that captive camels always exhibit was accurately recorded in his addressing one of them as "poor old horsie." And after watching the llamas in silence, when he saw them nibble at some grass he was satisfied. "Moo-cow," he stated positively, and turned away. The bears did not seem to interest him until he was reminded of Goldylocks. Then he remembered the pictures of the bears in that story and began to take stock of them.

The Zoo is a pleasant place to wander on a Sunday afternoon. The willow trees, down by the brook where the otters were plunging, were a cloud of delicate green. Shrubs everywhere were bursting into bud. The Tasmanian devils, those

odd little swine that look like small pigs in a high fever, were lying sprawled out, belly to the sun-warmed earth, in the same whimsical posture that dogs adopt when trying to express how jolly they feel. The Urchin's curators were at a loss to know what the Tasmanian devils were and at first were led astray by a sign on a tree in the devils' inclosure. "Look, they're Norway maples," cried one curator. In the same way we thought at first that a llama was a Chinese ginkgo. These errors lead to a decent humility.

There is something about a Zoo that always makes one hungry, so we sat on a bench in the sun, watched the stately swans ruffling like square-rigged ships on the sparkling pond, and ate biscuits, while the Urchin was given a mandate over some very small morsels. He was much entertained by the monkeys in the open-air cages. In the upper story of one cage a lady baboon was embracing an urchin of her own, while underneath her husband was turning over a pile of straw in a persistent search for small deer. It was a sad day for the monkeys at the Zoo when the rule was made that no peanuts can be brought into the park. I should have thought that peanuts were an inalienable right for captive monkeys. The order posted everywhere that one must not give the animals tobacco seems almost unnecessary nowadays, with the weed at present prices. The

Urchin was greatly interested in the baboon rummaging in his straw. "Mokey kicking the grass away," he observed thoughtfully.

Down in the grizzly-bear pit one of the bears squatted himself in the pool and sat there, grinning complacently at the crowd. We explained that the bear was taking a bath. This presented a familiar train of thought to the Urchin and he watched the grizzly climb out of his tank and scatter the water over the stone floor. As we walked away the Urchin observed thoughtfully, "He's dying." This somewhat shocked the curators, who did not know that their offspring had even heard of death. "What does he mean?" we asked ourselves. "He's dying," repeated the Urchin in a tone of happy conviction. Then the explanation struck us. "He's drying!" "Quite right," we said. "After his bath he has to dry himself."

We went home on a crowded Girard Avenue car, thinking impatiently that it will be some time before we can read *The Jungle Book* to the Urchin. In the summer, when the elephants take their bath outdoors, we'll go again. And the last thing the Urchin said that night as he fell asleep was, "Mokey kicking the grass away."

FELLOW CRAFTSMEN

ROBERT URWICK, the author, was not yet so calloused by success that he was immune from flattery. And so when he received the following letter he was rather pleased:

Mr. Robt. Urwick, dear sir I seen your story in this weeks Saturday Evn Cudgel, not that I can afford to buy journals of that stamp but I pick up the copy on a bench in the park. Now Mr. Urwick I am a poor man but I was brought up a patron of the arts and I am bound to say that story of yours called Brass Nuckles was a fine story and I am proud to compliment you upon it. Mr. Urwick that brings me to another matter upon which I have been intending to write you upon for a long time but did not like to risk an intrusion. I used to dable in literature to some little extent myself if that will lend a fellow feeling for a craftsman in distress. I am a poor man, out of work through no fault of mine but on account of the illness of my wife and my sitting up with her at nights for weeks and weeks I could not hold my job which required mentle concentration of a vigorous sort. Now Mr. Urwick I have a sick wife and

seven children to support, and the rent shortly due and the landlord threatens to eject us if I don't pay what I owe. As it happens my wife and I are hoping to be blessed again soon, with our eighth. Owing to my love and devotion for the fine arts we have named all the earlier children for noted authors or writers Rudyard Kipling, W. J. Bryan, Mark Twain, Debs, Irvin Cobb, Walt Mason and Ella Wheeler Wilcox. Now Mr. Urwick I thought that I would name the next one after you, seeing you have done so much for literature Robert if a boy or Roberta if a girl with Urwick for a middle name thus making you a godfather in a manner of speaking. I was wondering whether you would not feel like making a little godfathers gift for this innocent babe now about to come into the world and to bare your name. Say twenty dollars, but not a check if it can be avoided as owing to tempry ambarrassment I am not holding any bank account, and currency would be easier for me to convert into the necesity of life.

I wrote this letter once before but tore it up fearing to intrude, but now my need compels me to be frank. I hope you will adorn our literature with many more beautiful compositions similar to Brass Nuckles.

Yours truly
Mr. Henry Phillips
454 East 34 St.

Mr. Urwick, after reading this remarkable tribute twice, laughed heartily and looked in his bill-folder. Finding there a crisp ten-dollar note, he folded it into an envelope and mailed it to his admirer, inclosing with it a friendly letter wishing success to the coming infant who was to carry his name.

A fortnight later he found on his breakfast table a very soiled postal card with this message:

Dear and kind friend, the babe arrived and to the joy of all is a boy and has been cristened Robert Urwick Phillips. Unfortunately he is a sicly infant and the doctor says he must have port wine at once or he may not survive. His mother and I were overjoyed at your munificant gift and hope some day to tell the boy of his beanefactor, Mr. Kipling only sent five spot to his namesake. Do you think you could spare five dollars to help pay for port wine

Yours gratefully
Henry Phillips?

Mr. Urwick was a little surprised at the thought of port wine for one so young, but happening to be bound down town that morning he thought it might be interesting to look in at Mr. Phillips' residence and find out how his godchild was faring. If the child were really in distress he might perhaps

contribute a small sum to insure proper medical care.

The address proved to be a shabby tenement house hedged by saloons. A ragged little girl (he wondered whether she were Ella Wheeler Wilcox Phillips) pointed him to Mr. Phillips's door. Meeting no answer, he entered.

The room was empty—a single room, with a cot bed, an oil stove and a table littered with stationery and stamps. Of Mrs. Phillips, his namesake or the other seven he saw no signs. He advanced to the table.

Evidently Mr. Phillips was not a ready writer and his letters cost him some pains. Several lay open on the table in different stages of composition. They were all exactly the same in wording as the first one Urwick had received. They were addressed to Booth Tarkington, Don Marquis, Ellen Glasgow, Edna Ferber, Agnes Repplier, Holworthy Hall and Fannie Hurst. Each letter offered to name some coming child after these Parnassians. Near by lay a pile of old magazines from which the industrious Mr. Phillips evidently culled the names of his literary favourites.

Urwick smiled grimly and tiptoed from the room. On the stairs he met a fat charwoman. He asked her if Mr. Phillips were married. "Whisky is his wife and child," she replied.

A month later Urwick put Phillips into a story

which he sold to the *Saturday Evening Cudgel* for $500. When it was published he sent a marked copy of the magazine to the father of Robert Urwick Phillips with the following note:

"Dear Mr. Phillips—I owe you about $490. Come around some day and I'll blow you to lunch."

THE KEY RING

I KNOW a man who carries in his left-leg trouser pocket a large heavy key ring, on which there are a dozen or more keys of all shapes and sizes. There is a latchkey, and the key of his private office, and the key of his roll-top desk, and the key of his safe deposit box, and a key to the little mail box at the front door of his flat (he lives in what is known as a pushbutton apartment house), and a key that does something to his motor car (not being an automobilist, I don't know just what), and a key to his locker at the golf club, and keys of various travelling bags and trunks and filing cases, and all the other keys with which a busy man burdens himself. They make a noble clanking against his thigh when he walks (he is usually in a hurry), and he draws them out of his pocket with something of an imposing gesture when he approaches the ground glass door of his office at ten past nine every morning. Yet sometimes he takes them out and looks at them sadly. They are a mark and symbol of servitude, just as surely as if they had been heated red-hot and branded on his skin.

Not necessarily an unhappy servitude, I hasten

to remark, for servitude is not always an unhappy condition. It may be the happiest of conditions, and each of those little metal strips may be regarded as a medal of honour. In fact, my friend does so regard them. He does not think of the key of his roll-top desk as a reminder of hateful tasks that must be done willy-nilly, but rather as an emblem of hard work that he enjoys and that is worth doing. He does not think of the latchkey as a mandate that he must be home by seven o'clock, rain or shine; nor does he think of it as a souvenir of the landlord who must be infallibly paid on the first of the month next ensuing. No, he thinks of the latchkey as a magic wand that admits him to a realm of kindness, "whose service is perfect freedom," as say the fine old words in the prayer book. And he does not think of his safe deposit box as a hateful little casket of leases and life insurance policies and contracts and wills, but rather as the place where he has put some of his own past life into voluntary bondage—into Liberty Bondage—at four and a quarter per cent. Yet, however blithely he may psychologize these matters, he is wise enough to know that he is not a free man. However content in servitude, he does not blink the fact that it is servitude.

"Upon his will he binds a radiant chain," said Joyce Kilmer in a fine sonnet. However radiant, it is still a chain.

So it is that sometimes, in the lulls of telephoning and signing contracts and talking to salesmen and preparing estimates and dictating letters "that must get off to-night" and trying to wriggle out of serving on the golf club's house committee, my friend flings away his cigar, gets a corncob pipe out of his desk drawer, and contemplates his key ring a trifle wistfully. This nubby little tyrant that he carries about with him always makes him think of a river in the far Canadian north, a river that he visited once, long ago, before he had built up all the barbed wire of life about his spirit. It was a green lucid river that ran in a purposeful way between long fringes of pine trees. There were sandy shelves where he and a fellow canoeist with the good gift of silence built campfires and fried bacon, or fish of their own wooing. The name of that little river (his voice is grave as he recalls it), was the Peace; and it was not necessary to paddle if you didn't feel like it. "The current ran" (it is pathetic to hear him say it) "from four to seven miles an hour."

The tobacco smoke sifts and eddies into the carefully labelled pigeonholes of his desk, and his stenographer wonders whether she dare interrupt him to ask whether that word was "priority" or "minority" in the second paragraph of the memo to Mr. Ebbsmith. He smells that bacon again; he remembers stretching out on the cool sand to

watch the dusk seep up from the valley and flood the great clear arch of green-blue sky. He remembers that there were no key rings in his pocket then, no papers, no letters, no engagements to meet Mr. Fonseca at a luncheon of the Rotary Club to discuss demurrage. He remembers the clear sparkle of the Peace water in the sunshine, its downward swell and slant over many a boulder, its milky vexation where it slid among stones. He remembers what he had said to himself then, but had since forgotten, that no matter what wounds and perplexities the world offers, it also offers a cure for each one if we know where to seek it. Suddenly he gets a vision of the whole race of men, campers out on a swinging ball, brothers in the common motherhood of earth. Born out of the same inexplicable soil, bred to the same problems of star and wind and sun, what absurdity of civilization is it that has robbed men of this sense of kinship? Why he himself, he feels, could enter a Bedouin tent or an Eskimo snow-hut and find some bond of union with the inmates. The other night, he reflects, he saw moving pictures of some Fiji natives, and could read in their genial grinning faces the same human impulses he knew in himself. What have men done to cheat themselves of the enjoyment of this amazing world? "We've been cheated!" he cries, to the stenographer's horror.

He thinks of his friends, his partners, his employees, of conductors on trains and waiters in lunchrooms and drivers of taxicabs. He thinks, in one amazing flash of realization, of all the men and women he has ever seen or heard of—how each one nourishes secretly some little rebellion, some dream of a wider, freer life, a life less hampered, less mean, less material. He thinks how all men yearn to cross salt water, to scale peaks, to tramp until weary under a hot sun. He hears the Peace, in its far northern valley, brawling among stones, and his heart is very low.

"Mr. Edwards to see you," says the stenographer.

"I'm sorry, sir," says Edwards, "but I've had the offer of another job and I think I shall accept it. It's a good thing for a chap to get a chance——"

My friend slips the key ring back in his pocket.

"What's this?" he says. "Nonsense! When you've got a good job, the thing to do is to keep it. Stick to it, my boy. There's a great future for you here. Don't get any of those fool ideas about changing around from one thing to another."

THE APPLE THAT NO ONE ATE

THE other evening we went to dinner with a gentleman whom it pleases our fancy to call the Caliph.

Now a Caliph, according to our notion, is a Haroun-al-Raschid kind of person; one who governs a large empire of hearts with a genial and whimsical sway; circulating secretly among his fellow-men, doing kindnesses often not even suspected by their beneficiaries. He is the sort of person of whom the trained observer may think, when he hears an unexpected kindness-grenade exploding somewhere down the line, "I'll bet that came from the Caliph's dugout!" A Caliph's heart is not surrounded by barbed wire entanglements or a strip of No Man's Land. Also, and rightly, he is stern to malefactors and fakers of all sorts.

It would have been sad if any one so un-Caliphlike as William Hohenzollern had got his eisenbahn through to Bagdad, the city sacred to the memory of a genial despot who spent his cabarabian nights in an excellent fashion. That, however, has nothing to do with the story.

Mr. and Mrs. Caliph are people so delightful that they leave in one's mind a warm afterglow of benevolent sociability. They have an infinite interest and curiosity in the hubbub of human moods and crotchets that surrounds us all. And when one leaves their doorsill one has a genial momentum of the spirit that carries one on rapidly and cheerfully. One has an irresistible impulse to give something away, to stroke the noses of horses, to write a kind letter to the fuel administrator or do almost anything gentle and gratuitous. The Caliphs of the world don't know it, but that is the effect they produce on their subjects.

As we left, Mr. and Mrs. Caliph pressed upon us an apple. One of those gorgeous apples that seem to grow wrapped up in tissue paper, and are displayed behind plate glass windows. A huge apple, tinted with gold and crimson and pale yellow shading off to pink. The kind of apple whose colours are overlaid with a curious mist until you polish it on your coat, when it gleams like a decanter of claret. An apple so large and weighty that if it had dropped on Sir Isaac Newton it would have fractured his skull. The kind of apple that would have made the garden of Eden safe for democracy, because it is so beautiful no one would have thought of eating it.

That was the kind of apple the Caliph gave us.

It was a cold night, and we walked down Chestnut Street dangling that apple, rubbing it on our sleeve, throwing it up and down and catching it again. We stopped at a cigar store to buy some pipe tobacco. Still running on Caliph, by which we mean still beguiled by his geniality, we fell into talk with the tobacconist. "That's a fine apple you have there," said he. For an instant we thought of giving it to him, but then we reflected that a man whose days are spent surrounded by rich cigars and smokables is dangerously felicitous already, and a sudden joy might blast his blood vessels.

The shining of the street lamps was reflected on the polished skin of our fruit as we went our way. As we held it in our arms it glowed like a huge ruby. We passed a blind man selling pencils, and thought of giving it to him. Then we reflected that a blind man would lose half the pleasure of the adventure because he couldn't see the colours. We bought a pencil instead. Still running on Caliph, you see.

In our excitement we did what we always do in moments of stress—went into a restaurant and ordered a piece of hot mince pie. Then we remembered that we had just dined. Never mind, we sat there and contemplated the apple as it lay ruddily on the white porcelain tabletop. Should we give it to the waitress? No, because apples

were a commonplace to her. The window of the restaurant held a great pyramid of beauties. To her, an apple was merely something to be eaten, instead of the symbol of a grand escapade. Instead, we gave her a little medallion of a buffalo that happened to be in our pocket.

Already the best possible destination for that apple had come to our mind. Hastening zealously up a long flight of stairs in a certain large building we went to a corner where sits a friend of ours, a night watchman. Under a drop light he sits through long and tedious hours, beguiling his vigil with a book. He is a great reader. He eats books alive. Lately he has become much absorbed in Saint Francis of Assisi, and was deep in the *Little Flowers* when we found him.

"We've brought you something," we said, and held the apple where the electric light brought out all its brilliance.

He was delighted and his gentle elderly face shone with awe at the amazing vividness of the fruit.

"I tell you what I'll do," he said. "That apple's much too fine for me. I'll take it home to the wife."

Of course his wife will say the same thing. She will be embarrassed by the surpassing splendour of that apple and will give it to some friend of hers whom she thinks more worthy than herself.

And that friend will give it to someone else, and so it will go rolling on down the ages, passing from hand to hand, conferring delight, and never getting eaten. Ultimately someone, trying to think of a recipient really worthy of its deliciousness, will give it to Mr. and Mrs. Caliph. And they, blessed innocents, will innocently exclaim, "Why we never saw such a magnificent apple in all our lives."

And it will be true, for by that time the apple will gleam with an unearthly brightness, enhanced and burnished by all the kind thoughts that have surrounded it for so long.

As we walked homeward under a frosty sparkle of sky we mused upon all the different kinds of apples we have encountered. There are big glossy green apples and bright red apples and yellow apples and also that particularly delicious kind (whose name we forget) that is the palest possible cream colour—almost white. We have seen apples of strange shapes, something like a pear (sheep-noses, they call them), and the Maiden Blush apples with their delicate shading of yellow and debutante pink. And what a poetry in the names—Winesap, Pippin, Northern Spy, Baldwin, Ben Davis, York Imperial, Wolf River, Jonathan, Smokehouse, Summer Rambo, Rome Beauty, Golden Grimes, Shenango Strawberry, Benoni!

We suppose there is hardly a man who has not an apple orchard tucked away in his heart some-

where. There must be some deep reason for the old suspicion that the Garden of Eden was an apple orchard. Why is it that a man can sleep and smoke better under an apple tree than in any other kind of shade? Sir Isaac Newton was a wise man, and he chose an apple tree to sit beneath. (We have often wondered, by the way, how it is that no one has ever named an apple the Woolsthorpe after Newton's home in Lincolnshire, where the famous apple incident occurred.)

An apple orchard, if it is to fill the heart of man to the full with affectionate satisfaction, should straggle down a hillside toward a lake and a white road where the sun shines hotly. Some of its branches should trail over an old, lichened and weather-stained stone wall, dropping their fruit into the highway for thirsty pedestrians. There should be a little path running athwart it, down toward the lake and the old flat-bottomed boat, whose bilge is scattered with the black and shrivelled remains of angleworms used for bait. In warm August afternoons the sweet savour of ripening drifts warmly on the air, and there rises the drowsy hum of wasps exploring the windfalls that are already rotting on the grass. There you may lie watching the sky through the chinks of the leaves, and imagining the cool, golden tang of this autumn's cider vats.

You see what it is to have Caliphs in the world.

THE TRAGEDY OF WASHINGTON SQUARE

ONE of our favourite amusements at lunch-time is to walk down to Henry Rosa's pastry shop, and buy a slab of cinnamon bun. Then we walk round Washington Square, musing, and gradually walking round and engulfing the cinnamon bun at the same time. It is surprising what a large circumference those buns of Henry's have. By the time we have gnashed our way through one of those warm and mystic phenomena we don't want to eat again for a month.

The real reason for the cinnamon bun is to fortify us for the contemplation and onslaught upon a tragic problem that Washington Square presents to our pondering soul.

Washington Square is a delightful place. There are trees there, and publishing houses and warm green grass and a fire engine station. There are children playing about on the broad pavements that criss-cross the sward; there is a fine roof of blue sky, kept from falling down by the enormous building at the north side of the Square. But these

things present no problems. To our simple philosophy a tree is a vegetable, a child is an animal, a building is a mineral, and this classification needs no further scrutiny or analysis. But there is one thing in Washington Square that embodies an intellectual problem, a grappling of the soul, a matter for continual anguish and decision.

On the west side of the Square is the Swiss consulate, and, it is this that weighs upon our brooding spirit. How many times we have paused before that quiet little house and gazed upon the little red cross, a Maltese Cross, or a Cross of St. Hieronymus, or whatever the heraldic term is, that represents and symbolizes the diplomatic and spiritual presence of the Swiss republic. We have stood there and thought about William Tell and the Berne Convention and the St. Gothard Tunnel and St. Bernard dogs and winter sports and alpenstocks and edelweiss and the Jungfrau and all the other trappings and trappists that make Switzerland notable. We have mused upon the Swiss military system, which is so perfect that it has never had to be tested by war; and we have wondered what is the name of the President of Switzerland and how he keeps it out of the papers so successfully. One day we lugged an encyclopædia and the Statesman's Year Book out to the Square with us and sat down on a bench facing the consulate and read up about the Swiss cabinet

and the national bank of Switzerland and her child-labour problems. Accidentally we discovered the name of the Swiss President, but as he has kept it so dark we are not going to give away his secret.

Our dilemma is quite simple. Where there is a consulate there must be a consul, and it seems to us a dreadful thing that inside that building there lurks a Swiss envoy who does not know that we, here, we who are walking round the Square with our mouth full of Henry Rosa's bun, once spent a night in Switzerland. We want him to know that; we think he ought to know it; we think it is part of his diplomatic duty to know it. And yet how can we burst in on him and tell him that apparently irrelevant piece of information?

We have thought of various ways of breaking it to him, or should we say breaking him to it?

Should we rush in and say the Swiss national debt is $——, or—— kopecks, and then lead on to other topics such as the comparative heights of mountain peaks, letting the consul gradually grasp the fact that we have been in Switzerland? Or should we call him up on the telephone and make a mysterious appointment with him, when we could blurt it out brutally?

We are a modest and diffident man, and this little problem, which would be so trifling to many, presents inscrutable hardships to us.

Another aspect of the matter is this. We think the consul ought to know that we spent one night in Switzerland once; we think he ought to know what we were doing that night; but we also think he ought to know just why it was that we spent only one night in his beautiful country. We don't want him to think we hurried away because we were annoyed by anything, or because the national debt was so many rupees or piasters, or because child labour in Switzerland is——. It is the thought that the consul and all his staff are in total ignorance of our existence that galls us. Here we are, walking round and round the Square, bursting with information and enthusiasm about Swiss republicanism, and the consul never heard of us. How can we summon up courage enough to tell him the truth? That is the tragedy of Washington Square.

It was a dark, rainy night when we bicycled into Basel. We had been riding all day long, coming down from the dark clefts of the Black Forest, and we and our knapsack were wet through. We had been bicycling for six weeks with no more luggage than a rucksack could hold. We never saw such rain as fell that day we slithered and sloshed on the rugged slopes that tumble down to the Rhine at Basel. (The annual rainfall in Switzerland is ——.) When we got to the little hotel at

Basel we sat in the dining room with water running off us in trickles, until the head waiter glared. And so all we saw of Switzerland was the interior of the tobacconist's, where we tried, unsuccessfully, to get some English baccy. Then we went to bed while our garments were dried. We stayed in bed for ten hours, reading fairy tales and smoking and answering modestly through the transom when any one asked us questions.

The next morning we overhauled our wardrobe. We will not particularize, but we decided that one change of duds, after six weeks' bicycling, was not enough of a wardrobe to face the Jungfrau and the national debt and the child-labour problem, not to speak of the anonymous President and the other sights that matter (such as the Matterhorn). Also, our stock of tobacco had run out, and German or French tobacco we simply cannot smoke. Even if we could get along on substitute fumigants the issue of garments was imperative. The nearest place where we could get any clothes of the kind that we are accustomed to, the kind of clothes that are familiarly symbolized by three well-known initials, was London. And the only way we had to get to London was on our bicycle. We thought we had better get busy. It's a long bike ride from Basel to London. So we just went as far as the Basel Cathedral, not to seem too unappreciative of all the treasures that Switzerland

had been saving for us for countless centuries; then we got on board our patient steed and trundled off through Alsace.

That was in August, 1912, and we firmly intended to go back to Switzerland the next year to have another look at the rainfall and the rest of the statistics and status quos. But the opportunity has not come.

So that is why we wander disconsolately about Washington Square, trying to make up our mind to unburden our bosom to the Swiss consul and tell him the worst. But how can one go and interrupt a consul to tell him that sort of thing? Perhaps he wouldn't understand it at all; he would misunderstand our pathetic little story and be angry that we took up his time. He wouldn't think that a shortage of tobacco and clothing was a sufficient excuse for slighting William Tell and the Jungfrau. He wouldn't appreciate the frustrated emotion and longing with which we watch the little red cross at his front door, and think of all it means to us and all it might have meant.

We took another turn around Washington Square, trying to embolden ourself enough to go in and tell the consul all this. And then our heart failed us. We decided to write a piece for the paper about it, and if the consul ever sees it he will be generous and understand. He will know why, behind the humble façade of his consulate on

Washington Square, we see the heaven-piercing summits of Switzerland rising like a dream, blue and silver and tantalizing.

P. S. Since the above we have definitely decided not to go to call on the Swiss consul. Suppose he were only a vice-consul, a Philadelphia Swiss, who had never been to Switzerland in his life!

WALT WHITMAN MINIATURES

I

A DECENT respect to the opinions of mankind requires that one should have some excuse for being away from the office on a working afternoon. September sunshine and trembling blue air are not sufficient reasons, it seems. Therefore, if any one should brutally ask what I was doing the other day dangling down Chestnut Street toward the river, I should have to reply, "Looking for the *Wenonah*." The *Wenonah*, you will immediately conclude, is a moving picture theatre. But be patient a moment.

Lower Chestnut Street is a delightful place for one who does not get down there very often. The face of wholesale trade, dingier than the glitter of uptown shops, is far more exciting and romantic. Pavements are cumbered with vast packing cases; whiffs of tea and spice well up from cool cellars. Below Second Street I found a row of enormous sacks across the curb, with bright red and green wool pushing through holes in the burlap. Such

signs as WOOL, NOILS AND WASTE are frequent. I wonder what noils are? A big sign on Front Street proclaims TEA CADDIES, which has a pleasant grandmotherly flavour. A little brass plate, gleamingly polished, says HONORARY CONSULATE OF JAPAN. Beside immense motor trucks stood a shabby little horse and buggy, restored to service, perhaps, by the wartime shortage of gasoline. It was a typical one-horse shay of thirty years ago.

I crossed over to Camden on the ferry boat *Wildwood*, observing in the course of the voyage her sisters, *Bridgeton*, *Camden*, *Salem* and *Hammonton*. It is curious that no matter where one goes, one will always meet people who are travelling there for the first time. A small boy next to me was gazing in awe at the stalwart tower of the Victor Company, and snuffing with pleasure the fragrance of cooking tomatoes that makes Camden savoury at this time of year. Wagonloads of ripe Jersey tomatoes making their way to the soup factory are a jocund sight across the river just now.

Every ferry passenger is familiar with the rapid tinkling of the ratchet wheel that warps the landing stage up to the level of the boat's deck. I asked the man who was running the wheel where I would find the *Wenonah*. "She lays over in the old Market Street slip," he replied, and

cheerfully showed me just where to find her. "Is she still used?" I asked. "Mostly on Saturday nights and holidays," he said, "when there's a big crowd going across."

The *Wenonah*, as all Camden seafarers know, is a ferryboat, one of the old-timers, and I was interested in her because she and her sister, the *Beverly*, were Walt Whitman's favourite ferries. He crossed back and forth on them hundreds of times and has celebrated them in several paragraphs in *Specimen Days*. Perhaps this is the place to quote his memorandum dated January 12, 1882, which ought to interest all lovers of the Camden ferry:

"Such a show as the Delaware presented an hour before sundown yesterday evening, all along between Philadelphia and Camden, is worth weaving into an item. It was full tide, a fair breeze from the southwest, the water of a pale tawny colour, and just enough motion to make things frolicsome and lively. Add to these an approaching sunset of unusual splendour, a broad tumble of clouds, with much golden haze and profusion of beaming shaft and dazzle. In the midst of all, in the clear drab of the afternoon light, there steamed up the river the large new boat, the *Wenonah*, as pretty an object as you could wish to see, lightly and swiftly skimming along, all trim and white, covered with flags,

transparent red and blue streaming out in the breeze. Only a new ferryboat, and yet in its fitness comparable with the prettiest product of Nature's cunning, and rivalling it. High up in the transparent ether gracefully balanced and circled four or five great sea hawks, while here below, mid the pomp and picturesqueness of sky and river, swam this creature of artificial beauty and motion and power, in its way no less perfect."

You will notice that Walt Whitman describes the *Wenonah* as being white. The Pennsylvania ferryboats, as we know them, are all the brick-red colour that is familiar to the present generation. Perhaps older navigators of the Camden crossing can tell us whether the boats were all painted white in a less smoky era?

The *Wenonah* and the *Beverly* were lying in the now unused ferry slip at the foot of Market Street, alongside the great Victor Talking Machine works. Picking my way through an empty yard where some carpentering was going on, I found a deserted pier that overlooked the two old vessels and gave a fair prospect onto the river and the profile of Philadelphia. Sitting there on a pile of pebbles, I lit a pipe and watched the busy panorama of the river. I made no effort to disturb the normal and congenial lassitude that is the highest function of the human being: no Hindoo philosopher could have been more pleasantly at ease. (O. Henry,

one remembers, used to insist that what some of his friends called laziness was really "dignified repose.") Two elderly coloured men were loading gravel on to a cart not far away. I was a little worried as to what I could say if they asked what I was doing. In these days casual loungers along docksides may be suspected of depth bombs and high treason. The only truthful reply to any question would have been that I was thinking about Whitman. Such a remark, if uttered in Philadelphia, would undoubtedly have been answered by a direction to the chocolate factory on Race Street. But in Camden every one knows about Walt. Still, the coloured men said nothing beyond returning my greeting. Their race, wise in simplicity, knows that loafing needs no explanation and is its own excuse.

If Walt could revisit the ferries he loved so well, in New York and Philadelphia, he would find the former strangely altered in aspect. The New York skyline wears a very different silhouette against the sky, with its marvellous peaks and summits drawing the eye aloft. But Philadelphia's profile is (I imagine) not much changed. I do not know just when the City Hall tower was finished: Walt speaks of it as "three-fifths built" in 1879. That, of course, is the dominant unit in the view from Camden. Otherwise there are few outstanding elements. The gradual rise in height of the

buildings, from Front Street gently ascending up to Broad, gives no startling contrast of elevation to catch the gaze. The spires of the older churches stand up like soft blue pencils, and the massive cornices of the Curtis and Drexel buildings catch the sunlight. Otherwise the outline is even and well-massed in a smooth ascending curve.

It is curious how a man can stamp his personality upon earthly things. There will always be pilgrims to whom Camden and the Delaware ferries are full of excitement and meaning because of Walt Whitman. Just as Stratford is Shakespeare, so is Camden Whitman. Some supercilious observers, flashing through on the way to Atlantic City, may only see a town in which there is no delirious and seizing beauty. Let us remind them of Walt's own words:

A great city is that which has the greatest men and women,
If it be a few ragged huts it is still the greatest city in the whole world.

And as I came back across the river, and an airplane hovered over us at a great height, I thought how much we need a Whitman to-day, a poet who can catch the heart and meaning of these grievous bitter years, who can make plain the surging hopes that throb in the breasts of men. The world has not flung itself into agony without some unex-

pressed vision that lights the sacrifice. If Walt Whitman were here he would look on this new world of moving pictures and gasoline engines and U-boats and tell us what it means. His great heart, which with all its garrulous fumbling had caught the deep music of human service and fellowship, would have had true and fine words for us. And yet he would have found it a hard world for one of his strolling meditative observancy. A speeding motor truck would have run him down long ago!

As I left the ferry at Market Street I saw that the Norwegian steamer *Taunton* was unloading bananas at the Ericsson pier. Less than a month ago she picked up the survivors of the schooner *Madrugada*, torpedoed by a U-boat off Winter Bottom Shoal. On the *Madrugada* was a young friend of mine, a Dutch sailor, who told me of the disaster after he was landed in New York. To come unexpectedly on the ship that had rescued him seemed a great adventure. What a poem Walt Whitman could have made of it!

II

It is a weakness of mine—not a sinful one, I hope—that whenever I see any one reading a book in public I am agog to find out what it is. Crossing over to Camden this morning a young woman on the ferry was absorbed in a volume, and I couldn't

resist peeping over her shoulder. It was *Hans Brinker*. On the same boat were several schoolboys carrying copies of Myers' *History of Greece*. Quaint, isn't it, how our schools keep up the same old bunk! What earthly use will a smattering of Greek history be to those boys? Surely to our citizens of the coming generation the battles of the Marne will be more important than the scuffle at Salamis.

My errand in Camden was to visit the house on Mickle Street where Walt Whitman lived his last years. It is now occupied by Mrs. Thomas Skymer, a friendly Italian woman, and her family. Mrs. Skymer graciously allowed me to go through the downstairs rooms.

I don't suppose any literary shrine on earth is of more humble and disregarded aspect than Mickle Street. It is a little cobbled byway, grimed with drifting smoke from the railway yards, littered with wind-blown papers and lined with small wooden and brick houses sooted almost to blackness. It is curious to think, as one walks along that bumpy brick pavement, that many pilgrims from afar have looked forward to visiting Mickle Street as one of the world's most significant altars. As Chesterton wrote once, "We have not yet begun to get to the beginning of Whitman." But the wayfarer of to-day will find Mickle Street far from impressive.

The little house, a two-story frame cottage, painted dark brown, is numbered 330. (In Whitman's day it was 328.) On the pavement in front stands a white marble stepping-block with the carved initials W. W.—— given to the poet, I dare say, by the same friends who bought him a horse and carriage. A small sign, in English and Italian, says: *Thomas A. Skymer, Automobiles to Hire on Occasions.* It was with something of a thrill that I entered the little front parlour where Walt used to sit, surrounded by his litter of papers and holding forth to faithful listeners. One may safely say that his was a happy old age, for there were those who never jibbed at protracted audience.

A description of that room as it was in the last days of Whitman's life may not be uninteresting. I quote from the article published by the Philadelphia *Press* of March 27, 1892, the day after the poet's death:

> Below the windowsill a four-inch pine shelf is swung, on which rests a bottle of ink, two or three pens and a much-rubbed spectacle case.

(The shelf, I am sorry to say, is no longer there.)

> The table—between which and the wall is the poet's rocker covered with a worsted afghan, presented to him one Christmas by a bevy of college girls who admired his work—is so thickly piled with books and

magazines, letters and the raffle of a literary desk that there is scarcely an inch of room upon which he may rest his paper as he writes. A volume of Shakespeare lies on top of a heaping full waste basket that was once used to bring peaches to market, and an ancient copy of Worcester's Dictionary shares places in an adjacent chair with the poet's old and familiar soft gray hat, a newly darned blue woolen sock and a shoe-blacking brush. There is a paste bottle and brush on the table and a pair of scissors, much used by the poet, who writes, for the most part, on small bits of paper and parts of old envelopes and pastes them together in patchwork fashion.

In spite of a careful examination, I could find nothing in the parlour at all reminiscent of Whitman's tenancy, except the hole for the stovepipe under the mantel. One of Mrs. Skymer's small boys told me that "He" died in that room. Evidently small Louis Skymer didn't in the least know who "He" was, but realized that his home was in some vague way connected with a mysterious person whose memory occasionally attracts inquirers to the house.

Behind the parlour is a dark little bedroom, and then the kitchen. In a corner of the back yard is a curious thing: a large stone or terra cotta bust of a bearded man, very much like Whitman himself, but the face is battered and the nose broken so it would be hard to assert this definitely. One

of the boys told me that it was in the yard when they moved in a year or so ago. The house is a little dark, standing between two taller brick neighbours. At the head of the stairs I noticed a window with coloured panes, which lets in spots of red, blue and yellow light. I imagine that this patch of vivid colour was a keen satisfaction to Walt's acute senses. Such is the simple cottage that one associates with America's literary declaration of independence.

The other Whitman shrine in Camden is the tomb in Harleigh Cemetery, reached by the Haddonfield trolley. Doctor Oberholtzer, in his *Literary History of Philadelphia*, calls it "tawdry," to which I fear I must demur. Built into a quiet hillside in that beautiful cemetery, of enormous slabs of rough-hewn granite with a vast stone door standing symbolically ajar, it seemed to me grotesque, but greatly impressive. It is a weird pagan cromlech, with a huge triangular boulder above the door bearing only the words WALT WHITMAN. Palms and rubber plants grow in pots on the little curved path leading up to the tomb; above it is an uncombed hillside and trees flickering in the air. At this tomb, designed (it is said) by Whitman himself, was held that remarkable funeral ceremony on March 30, 1892, when a circus tent was not large enough to roof the crowd, and peanut vendors did busi-

ness on the outskirts of the gathering. Perhaps it is not amiss to recall what Bob Ingersoll said on that occasion:

> He walked among verbal varnishers and veneerers, among literary milliners and tailors, with the unconscious dignity of an antique god. He was the poet of that divine democracy that gives equal rights to all the sons and daughters of men. He uttered the great American voice.

And though one finds in the words of the naïve Ingersoll the squeaking timber of the soapbox, yet even a soapbox does lift a man a few inches above the level of the clay.

Well, the Whitman battle is not over yet, nor ever will be. Though neither Philadelphia nor Camden has recognized 330 Mickle Street as one of the authentic shrines of our history (Lord, how trimly dight it would be if it were in New England!), Camden has made a certain amend in putting Walt into the gay mosaic that adorns the portico of the new public library in Cooper Park. There, absurdly represented in an austere black cassock, he stands in the following frieze of great figures: Dante, Whitman, Molière, Gutenberg, Tyndale, Washington, Penn, Columbus, Moses, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Shakespeare, Longfellow and Palestrina. I believe that there was some rumpus as to whether Walt should be included; but, anyway, there he is.

You will make a great mistake if you don't ramble over to Camden some day and fleet the golden hours in an observant stroll. Himself the prince of loafers, Walt taught the town to loaf. When they built the new post office over there they put round it a ledge for philosophic lounging, one of the most delightful architectural features I have ever seen. And on Third Street, just around the corner from 330 Mickle Street, is the oddest plumber's shop in the world. Mr. George F. Hammond, a Civil War veteran, who knew Whitman and also Lincoln, came to Camden in '69. In 1888 he determined to build a shop that would be different from anything on earth, and well he succeeded. Perhaps it is symbolic of the shy and harassed soul of the plumber, fleeing from the unreasonable demands of his customers, for it is a kind of Gothic fortress. Leaded windows, gargoyles, masculine medusa heads, a sallyport, loopholes and a little spire. I stopped in to talk to Mr. Hammond, and he greeted me graciously. He says that people have come all the way from California to see his shop, and I can believe it. It is the work of a delightful and original spirit who does not care to live in a demure hutch like all the rest of us, and has really had some fun out of his whimsical little castle. He says he would rather live in Camden than in Philadelphia, and I daresay he's right.

III

Something in his aspect as he leaned over the railing near me drew me on to speak to him. I don't know just how to describe it except by saying that he had an understanding look. He gave me the impression of a man who had spent his life in thinking and would understand me, whatever I might say. He looked like the kind of man to whom one would find one's self saying wise and thoughtful things. There are some people, you know, to whom it is impossible to speak wisdom even if you should wish to. No spirit of kindly philosophy speaks out of their eyes. You find yourself automatically saying peevish or futile things that you do not in the least believe.

The mood and the place were irresistible for communion. The sun was warm along the river front and my pipe was trailing a thin whiff of blue vapour out over the gently fluctuating water, which clucked and sagged along the slimy pilings. Behind us the crash and banging of heavy traffic died away into a dreamy undertone in the mild golden shimmer of the noon hour.

The old man was apparently lost in reverie, looking out over the river toward Camden. He was plainly dressed in coat and trousers of some coarse weave. His shirt, partly unbuttoned under the great white sweep of his beard, was of gray

flannel. His boots were those of a man much accustomed to walking. A weather-stained sombrero was on his head. Beneath it his thick white hair and whiskers wavered in the soft breeze. Just then a boy came out from the near-by ferry house carrying a big crate of daffodils, perhaps on their way from some Jersey farm to an uptown florist. We watched them shining and trembling across the street, where he loaded them onto a truck. The old gentleman's eyes, which were a keen gray blue, caught mine as we both turned from admiring the flowers.

I don't know just why I said it, but they were the first words that popped into my head. "'And then my heart with pleasure fills and dances with the daffodils,'" I quoted.

He looked at me a little quizzically.

"You imported those words on a ship," he said. "Why don't you use some of your own instead?"

I was considerably taken aback. "Why, I don't know," I hesitated. "They just came into my head."

"Well, I call that bad luck," he said, "when someone else's words come into a man's head instead of words of his own."

He looked about him, watching the scene with rich satisfaction. "It's good to see all this again," he said. "I haven't loafed around here for going on thirty years."

"You've been out of town?" I asked.

He looked at me with a steady blue eye in which there was something of humour and something of sadness.

"Yes, a long way out. I've just come back to see how the Great Idea is getting along. I thought maybe I could help a little."

"The Great Idea?" I queried, puzzled.

"The value of the individual," he said. "The necessity for every human being to be able to live, think, act, dream, pray for himself. Nowadays I believe you call it the League of Nations. It's the same thing. Are men to be free to decide their fate for themselves or are they to be in the grasp of irresponsible tyrants, the hell of war, the cruelties of creeds, executive deeds just or unjust, the power of personality just or unjust? What are your poets, your young Libertads, doing to bring about the Great Idea of perfect and free individuals?"

I was rather at a loss, but happily he did not stay for an answer. Above us an American flag was fluttering on a staff, showing its bright ribs of scarlet clear and vivid against the sky.

"You see that flag of stars," he said, "that thick-sprinkled bunting? I have seen that flag stagger in the agony of threatened dissolution, in years that trembled and reeled beneath us. You have only seen it in the days of its easy, sure

triumphs. I tell you, now is the day for America to show herself, to prove her dreams for the race. But who is chanting the poem that comes from the soul of America, the carol of victory? Who strikes up the marches of Libertad that shall free this tortured ship of earth? Democracy is the destined conqueror, yet I see treacherous lip-smiles everywhere and death and infidelity at every step. I tell you, now is the time of battle, now the time of striving. I am he who tauntingly compels men, women, nations, crying, 'Leap from your seats, and contend for your lives!' I tell you, produce great Persons; the rest follows."

"What do you think about the covenant of the League of Nations?" I asked. He looked out over the river for some moments before replying and then spoke slowly, with halting utterance that seemed to suffer anguish in putting itself into words.

"America will be great only if she builds for all mankind," he said. "This plan of the great Libertad leads the present with friendly hand toward the future. But to hold men together by paper and seal or by compulsion is no account. That only holds men together which aggregates all in a living principle, as the hold of the limbs of the body or the fibre of plants. Does this plan answer universal needs? Can it face the open fields and the seaside?

Will it absorb into me as I absorb food, air, to appear again in my strength, gait, face? Have real employments contributed to it—original makers, not mere amanuenses? I think so, and therefore I say to you, now is the day to fight for it.

"Well," he said, checking himself, "there's the ferry coming in. I'm going over to Camden to have a look around on my way back to Harleigh."

"I'm afraid you'll find Mickle Street somewhat changed," I said, for by this time I knew him.

"I love changes," he said.

"Your centennial comes on May 31," I said. "I hope you won't be annoyed if Philadelphia doesn't pay much attention to it. You know how things are around here."

"My dear boy," he said, "I am patient. The proof of a poet shall be sternly deferred till his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it. I have sung the songs of the Great Idea and that is reward in itself. I have loved the earth, sun, animals, I have despised riches, I have given alms to everyone that asked, stood up for the stupid and crazy, devoted my income and labour to others, hated tyrants, argued not concerning God, had patience and indulgence toward the people, taken off my hat to nothing known or unknown, gone freely with powerful uneducated

persons, and I swear I begin to see the meaning of these things——"

"All aboard!" cried the man at the gate of the ferry house.

He waved his hand with a benign patriarchal gesture and was gone.

DOORS

THE opening and closing of doors are the most significant actions of man's life. What a mystery lies in doors!

No man knows what awaits him when he opens a door. Even the most familiar room, where the clock ticks and the hearth glows red at dusk, may harbour surprises. The plumber may actually have called (while you were out) and fixed that leaking faucet. The cook may have had a fit of the vapours and demanded her passports. The wise man opens his front door with humility and a spirit of acceptance.

Which one of us has not sat in some ante-room and watched the inscrutable panels of a door that was full of meaning? Perhaps you were waiting to apply for a job; perhaps you had some "deal" you were ambitious to put over. You watched the confidential stenographer flit in and out, carelessly turning that mystic portal which, to you, revolved on hinges of fate. And then the young woman said, "Mr. Cranberry will see you now." As you grasped the knob the thought flashed,

"When I open this door again, what will have happened?"

There are many kinds of doors. Revolving doors for hotels, shops and public buildings. These are typical of the brisk, bustling ways of modern life. Can you imagine John Milton or William Penn skipping through a revolving door? Then there are the curious little slatted doors that still swing outside denatured barrooms and extend only from shoulder to knee. There are trapdoors, sliding doors, double doors, stage doors, prison doors, glass doors. But the symbol and mystery of a door resides in its quality of concealment. A glass door is not a door at all, but a window. The meaning of a door is to hide what lies inside; to keep the heart in suspense.

Also, there are many ways of opening doors. There is the cheery push of elbow with which the waiter shoves open the kitchen door when he bears in your tray of supper. There is the suspicious and tentative withdrawal of a door before the unhappy book agent or peddler. There is the genteel and carefully modulated recession with which footmen swing wide the oaken barriers of the great. There is the sympathetic and awful silence of the dentist's maid who opens the door into the operating room and, without speaking, implies that the doctor is ready for you. There is the brisk cataclysmic opening of a door when the nurse

comes in, very early in the morning—"It's a boy!"

Doors are the symbol of privacy, of retreat, of the mind's escape into blissful quietude or sad secret struggle. A room without doors is not a room, but a hallway. No matter where he is, a man can make himself at home behind a closed door. The mind works best behind closed doors. Men are not horses to be herded together. Dogs know the meaning and anguish of doors. Have you ever noticed a puppy yearning at a shut portal? It is a symbol of human life.

The opening of doors is a mystic act: it has in it some flavour of the unknown, some sense of moving into a new moment, a new pattern of the human rigmarole. It includes the highest glimpses of mortal gladness: reunions, reconciliations, the bliss of lovers long parted. Even in sadness, the opening of a door may bring relief: it changes and redistributes human forces. But the closing of doors is far more terrible. It is a confession of finality. Every door closed brings something to an end. And there are degrees of sadness in the closing of doors. A door slammed is a confession of weakness. A door gently shut is often the most tragic gesture in life. Everyone knows the seizure of anguish that comes just after the closing of a door, when the loved one is still near, within sound of voice, and yet already far away.

The opening and closing of doors is a part of the stern fluency of life. Life will not stay still and let us alone. We are continually opening doors with hope, closing them with despair. Life lasts not much longer than a pipe of tobacco, and destiny knocks us out like the ashes.

The closing of a door is irrevocable. It snaps the packthread of the heart. It is no avail to reopen, to go back. Pinero spoke nonsense when he made Paula Tanqueray say, "The future is only the past entered through another gate." Alas, there is no other gate. When the door is shut, it is shut forever. There is no other entrance to that vanished pulse of time. "The moving finger writes, and having writ"—

There is a certain kind of door-shutting that will come to us all. The kind of door-shutting that is done very quietly, with the sharp click of the latch to break the stillness. They will think then, one hopes, of our unfulfilled decencies rather than of our pluperfected misdemeanours. Then they will go out and close the door.

OUTWARD BOUND

Sailed Yesterday: ship *Tusitala,* Rio Janeiro
—*Ship-news item,* August 10, 1923

WE HAD seen her under every circumstance of humiliation and disorder. We had seen her as she was the morning, ten weeks ago, she towed in to the Morse yard at Brooklyn. Dumb, dubious, despondent, she was plainly wondering what would happen next. We had seen her standing high in dry-dock; had seen her in the mess and clutter of trailing gear; had seen her foul with coal-dust under the tips at Communipaw. Now, for the first time, was a chance to see her on her own terms.

She lay at anchor off Stapleton.

Loaded down to her marks, and seen in a decent perspective, with green open water about her, it was really possible to esteem the true beauty of her white hull, the tall rake of the masts. Her hatches were battened down; on deck was lashed

a great sixty-foot timber to serve as jury rig in case of emergency. This, one felt, was the full and final touch of reality. Though an old seafaring man who was making final inspection of her had one other criterion. He looked approvingly on the gasoline winch, the new Gould pump, the patent log, and even on the Oxford Press prayer-book which the skipper had particularly asked for as a parting gift from the Three Hours for Lunch Club. But our expert was not satisfied until he saw the grindstone forward among the anchor gear under the focsle head. "Never go to sea without a grindstone," he said.

Captain Coalfleet, accompanied by the Sandy Hook Pilot, returned from the Brazilian Consulate aboard tug *Federal Number 1*, which was to tow her out to sea. Those devotees who were to see the last of her got aboard the tug. There was no chanteying at the capstan, which was turned not by man power but by a cable from the winch. Slowly the chain came up. The attitude of Mr. Mikkelson, the mate, as he leaned far over the cathead watching the chain rise link by link, was as good as a poem. A happy man, we suspected, was Mr. Mikkelson. He had stood by her in the long days when she was idle and empty at Hampton Roads, destined (it seemed) to be sold and broken up. And here she was, in cargo again, reclassed 100-A1 at Lloyd's and hoisting her destination

signal from the halliards on the mizzen. Gently, very gently, *Federal Number 1* began to bear on the towing hawser. The "Black Shape" or anchorage signal came down from the forestay. She moved forward and was under way. Her name signal was hoisted for the watchers at Quarantine, MFCR, a bright string of blue, red, white and yellow. We remembered that one friendly correspondent had suggested as an expansion of that anagram *My Friends Chose Romance.*

It's a long tow out through the Narrows, the lower bay (bending southward through the old channel, as towing is not allowed in the Ambrose groove), past the Hook and clear beyond the Ambrose light vessel. At the end of the hawser she came stately along, the airy triangles of her rigging daintily pencilled on pale air. It was a perfection day: surely no horizon was ever more clear, sharp as an etcher's line against the sky.

Great ships came past her, down the channel: the *Finland* and the *Conte Verde*, running almost neck and neck towards open space; the *Hansa*, once (we believe) the famous *Deutschland.* (Which reminds us that coming past the Brooklyn docks in the tug we saw a ship with the astounding name *The Lambs.* We were told it was so named by a Shipping Board mandarin who had been jovially entertained at that high-spirited club, and during the meal promised to name a vessel after it.)

A swift power-boat, *Polly*, came tearing after us; ran under *Tusitala's* stern and sped alongside for a while, evidently curious to know what was this sudden coming to life of an old sea-print. For indeed she looked rather like something that had come to life from the picture-hung walls of India House.

So she proceeded, slowly slipping across the wide bay above Sandy Hook. The buoys, like tips of red rockets, peeped out of the green water. Now that her white hull was down to the Plimsoll mark the amazing tallness of her build was apparent; one was glad that there were 2,400 tons of coal aboard to steady that nearly 40,000 square feet of canvas. And as the swells came rolling in past the Hook we noticed the jibs bundled at the tip of the bowsprit begin to flutter. She lifted and leaned a little. The whole spider pattern of her cordage (there are some 24,000 feet of running rigging, apart from stays and shrouds) seemed to tremble. The blocks, silhouetted against the falling light, which was abaft her, were like fat flies caught in a web, a web cunningly devised of gossamer triangles and trapezoids.

She passed the Hook. Suddenly there were tiny figures running aloft, in black outline against the bright afternoon. The jib shook out and bellied plumply; then the lower topsails. Her forefoot rose slightly; with an almost imperceptible gesture

she seemed to curtsy to her old friend and enemy the sea. Who could doubt her alive? Like some great lady, proud, yet not too proud, she made just obeisance to the world she understood. Not quite sure of herself yet in her new name and her new clothes, and yet suddenly and strangely feeling the old manners and etiquette coming back to mind. She rose gracefully over a long low slope of the swell. Was that the way? Why, yes, that was it exactly. And she shook out her upper topsails.

By the time the pilot boat was reached, and two brawny fellows took the pilot off in their rowboat, she had on her full suit. Faint as the breeze was, she was under her own way; the towing hawser had little to do. But in such light air, the skipper was cautious. The tug did not cast off until well beyond Ambrose lightship.

With the prostrate sun full behind her, she overhauled us, rippling steadily. In our ignorance, we had not known anything could be so beautiful. In that level flush of light she was daintily gilded alow and aloft. She moved like a dream. A phrase of Conrad's—that we can never exactly recall, but it moves vaguely in our mind—came to utterance. "Ships, the most beautiful work of men's hands and the object of their care." She was only a little creature, after all, in that vast cave of sunset light and setting out on such unreasonable spaces. And

we knew that however one may sentimentalize the beauty of sailing ships, it is not an easy life that they lead.

The tug gave her a long salute. She dipped her ensign and moved nobly past. On such occasions there is only one phrase possible; a phrase that is a theology in itself. Good luck! She moved away, her high comeliness gradually melting into new shapes as the perspective altered. Barely enough breeze to keep her canvas drawing, she was long in sight, like a tall tower far at sea.

ON MAKING FRIENDS

CONSIDERING that most friendships are made by mere hazard, how is it that men find themselves equipped and fortified with just the friends they need? We have heard of men who asserted that they would like to have more money, or more books, or more pairs of pyjamas; but we have never heard of a man saying that he did not have enough friends. For, while one can never have too many friends, yet those one has are always enough. They satisfy us completely. One has never met a man who would say, "I wish I had a friend who would combine the good humour of A, the mystical enthusiasm of B, the love of doughnuts which is such an endearing quality in C, and who would also have the habit of giving Sunday evening suppers like D, and the well-stocked cellar which is so deplorably lacking in E." No; the curious thing is that at any time and in any settled way of life a man is generally provided with friends far in excess of his desert, and also in excess of his capacity to absorb their wisdom and affectionate attentions.

There is some pleasant secret behind this, a secret that none is wise enough to fathom. The infinite fund of disinterested humane kindliness that is adrift in the world is part of the riddle, the insoluble riddle of life that is born in our blood and tissue. It is agreeable to think that no man, save by his own gross fault, ever went through life unfriended, without companions to whom he could stammer his momentary impulses of sagacity, to whom he could turn in hours of loneliness. It is not even necessary to know a man to be his friend. One can sit at a lunch counter, observing the moods and whims of the white-coated pie-passer, and by the time you have juggled a couple of fried eggs you will have caught some grasp of his philosophy of life, seen the quick edge and tang of his humour, memorized the shrewdness of his worldly insight and been as truly stimulated as if you had spent an evening with your favourite parson.

If there were no such thing as friendship existing to-day, it would perhaps be difficult to understand what it is like from those who have written about it. We have tried, from time to time, to read Emerson's enigmatic and rather frigid essay. It seems that Emerson must have put his cronies to a severe test before admitting them to the high-vaulted and rather draughty halls of his intellect. There are fine passages in his essay, but it is in-

tellectualized, bloodless, heedless of the trifling oddities of human intercourse that make friendship so satisfying. He seems to insist upon a sterile ceremony of mutual self-improvement, a kind of religious ritual, a profound interchange of doctrines between soul and soul. His friends (one gathers) are to be antisepticated, all the poisons and pestilence of their faulty humours are to be drained away before they may approach the white and icy operating table of his heart. "Why insist," he says, "on rash personal relations with your friend? Why go to his house, or know his wife and family?" And yet does not the botanist like to study the flower in the soil where it grows?

Polonius, too, is another ancient supposed to be an authority on friendship. The Polonius family must have been a thoroughly dreary one to live with; we have often thought that poor Ophelia would have gone mad anyway, even if there had been no Hamlet. Laertes preaches to Ophelia; Polonius preaches to Laertes. Laertes escaped by going abroad, but the girl had to stay at home. Hamlet saw that pithy old Polonius was a preposterous and orotund ass. Polonius's doctrine of friendship—"The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried, grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel"—was, we trow, a necessary one in his case. It would need a hoop of steel to keep them near such a dismal old sawmonger.

Friendships, we think, do not grow up in any such carefully tended and contemplated fashion as Messrs. Emerson and Polonius suggest. They begin haphazard. As we look back on the first time we saw our friends we find that generally our original impression was curiously astray. We have worked along beside them, have consorted with them drunk or sober, have grown to cherish their delicious absurdities, have outrageously imposed on each other's patience—and suddenly we awoke to realize what had happened. We had, without knowing it, gained a new friend. In some curious way the unseen border line had been passed. We had reached the final culmination of Anglo-Saxon regard when two men rarely look each other straight in the eyes because they are ashamed to show each other how fond they are. We had reached the fine flower and the ultimate test of comradeship—that is, when you get a letter from one of your "best friends," you know you don't need to answer it until you get ready to.

Emerson is right in saying that friendship can't be hurried. It takes time to ripen. It needs a background of humorous, wearisome, or even tragic events shared together, a certain tract of memories shared in common, so that you know that your own life and your companion's have really moved for some time in the same channel. It needs interchange of books, meals together, discussion

of one another's whims with mutual friends, to gain a proper perspective. It is set in a rich haze of half-remembered occasions, sudden glimpses, ludicrous pranks, unsuspected observations, midnight confidences when heart spoke to candid heart.

The soul preaches humility to itself when it realizes, startled, that it has won a new friend. Knowing what a posset of contradictions we all are, it feels a symptom of shame at the thought that our friend knows all our frailties and yet thinks us worth affection. We all have cause to be shamefast indeed; for whereas we love ourselves in spite of our faults, our friends often love us even on account of our faults, the highest level to which attachment can go. And what an infinite appeal there is in their faces! How we grow to cherish those curious little fleshy cages—so oddly sculptured—which inclose the spirit within. To see those faces, bent unconsciously over their tasks—each different, each unique, each so richly and queerly expressive of the lively and perverse enigma of man, is a full education in human tolerance. Privately, one studies his own ill-modelled visnomy to see if by any chance it bespeaks the emotions he inwardly feels. We know—as Hamlet did—the vicious mole of nature in us, the o'ergrowth of some complexion that mars the purity of our secret resolutions. Yet—our friends have

passed it over, have shown their willingness to take us as we are. Can we do less than hope to deserve their generous tenderness, granted before it was earned?

The problem of education, said R. L. S., is twofold—"first to know, then to utter." Every man knows what friendship means, but few can utter that complete frankness of communion, based upon full comprehension of mutual weakness, enlivened by a happy understanding of honourable intentions generously shared. When we first met our friends we met with bandaged eyes. We did not know what journeys they had been on, what winding roads their spirits had travelled, what ingenious shifts they had devised to circumvent the walls and barriers of the world. We know these now, for some of them they have told us; others we have guessed. We have watched them when they little dreamed it; just as they (we suppose) have done with us. Every gesture and method of their daily movement has become part of our enjoyment of life. Not until a time comes for saying goodbye will we ever know how much we would like to have said. At those times one has to fall back on shrewder tongues. You remember Hilaire Belloc:

> From quiet homes and first beginning
> Out to the undiscovered ends,
> There's nothing worth the wear of winning
> But laughter, and the love of friends.

THOUGHTS ON CIDER

OUR friend Dove Dulcet, the poet, came into our kennel and found us arm in arm with a deep demijohn of Chester County cider. We poured him out a beaker of the cloudy amber juice. It was just in prime condition, sharpened with a blithe tingle, beaded with a pleasing bubble of froth. Dove looked upon it with a kindled eye. His arm raised the tumbler in a manner that showed this gesture to be one that he had compassed before. The orchard nectar began to sluice down his throat.

Dove is one who has faced many and grievous woes. His Celtic soul peers from behind cloudy curtains of alarm. Old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago fume in the smoke of his pipe. His girded spirit sees agrarian unrest in the daffodil and industrial riot in a tin of preserved prunes. He sees the world moving on the brink of horror and despair. Sweet dalliance with a baked bloater on a restaurant platter moves him to grief over the hard lot of the Newfoundland fishing fleet. Six cups of tea warm him to anguish over the peonage of Sir

Thomas Lipton's coolies in Ceylon. Souls in perplexity cluster round him like Canadian dimes in a cash register in Plattsburgh, N. Y. He is a human sympathy trust. When we are on our deathbed we shall send for him. The perfection of his gentle sorrow will send us roaring out into the dark, and will set a valuable example to the members of our family.

But it is the rack of clouds that makes the sunset lovely. The bosomy vapours of Dove's soul are the palette upon which the decumbent sun of his spirit casts its vivid orange and scarlet colours. His joy is the more perfect to behold because it bursts goldenly through the pangs of his tender heart. His soul is like the infant Moses, cradled among dark and prickly bullrushes; but anon it floats out upon the river and drifts merrily downward on a sparkling spate.

It has nothing to do with Dove, but we will here interject the remark that a pessimist overtaken by liquor is the cheeriest sight in the world. Who is so extravagantly, gloriously, and irresponsibly gay?

Dove's eyes beaconed as the cider went its way. The sweet lingering tang filled the arch of his palate with a soft mellow cheer. His gaze fell upon us as his head tilted gently backward. We wish there had been a painter there to rush onto canvas the gorgeous benignity of his aspect. It would have been a portrait of the rich Flemish school. Dove's

eyes were full of a tender emotion, mingled with a charmed and wistful surprise. It was as though the poet was saying he had not realized there was anything so good left on earth. His bearing was devout, religious, mystical. In one moment of revelation (so it appeared to us as we watched) Dove looked upon all the profiles and aspects of life, and found them of noble outline. Not since the grandest of Grand Old Parties went out of power has Dove looked less as though he felt the world were on the verge of an abyss. For several moments revolution and anarchy receded, profiteers were tamed, capital and labour purred together on a mattress of catnip, and the cosmos became a free verse poem. He did not even utter the customary and ungracious remark of those to whom cider potations are given: "That'll be at its best in about a week." We apologized for the cider being a little warmish from standing (discreetly hidden) under our desk. Douce man, he said: "I think cider, like ale, ought not to be drunk too cold. I like it just this way." He stood for a moment, filled with theology and metaphysics. "By gracious," he said, "it makes all the other stuff taste like poison." Still he stood for a brief instant, transfixed with complete bliss. It was apparent to us that his mind was busy with apple orchards and autumn sunshine. Perhaps he was wondering whether he could make a poem out of it. Then he

turned softly and went back to his job in a life insurance office.

As for ourself, we then poured out another tumbler, lit a corncob pipe, and meditated. Falstaff once said that he had forgotten what the inside of a church looked like. There will come a time when many of us will perhaps have forgotten what the inside of a saloon looked like, but there will still be the consolation of the cider jug. Like the smell of roasting chestnuts and the comfortable equatorial warmth of an oyster stew, it is a consolation hard to put into words. It calls irresistibly for tobacco; in fact the true cider toper always pulls a long puff at his pipe before each drink, and blows smoke into the glass so that he gulps down some of the blue reek with his draught. Just why this should be, we know not. Also some enthusiasts insist on having small sugared cookies with their cider; others cry loudly for Reading pretzels. Some have ingenious theories about letting the jug stand, tightly stoppered, until it becomes "hard." In our experience hard cider is distressingly like drinking vinegar. We prefer it soft, with all its sweetness and the transfusing savour of the fruit animating it. At the peak of its deliciousness it has a small, airy sparkle against the roof of the mouth, a delicate tactile sensation like the feet of dancing flies. This, we presume, is the $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 7 per cent. of sin with which fermented cider is credited

by works of reference. There are pedants and bigots who insist that the jug must be stoppered with a corncob. For our own part, the stopper does not stay in the neck long enough after the demijohn reaches us to make it worth while worrying about this matter. Yet a nice attention to detail may prove that the cob has some secret affinity with cider, for a Missouri meerschaum never tastes so well as after three glasses of this rustic elixir.

That ingenious student of social niceties, John Mistletoe, in his famous *Dictionary of Deplorable Facts*—a book which we heartily commend to the curious, for he includes a long and most informing article on cider, tracing its etymology from the old Hebrew word *shaker* meaning "to quaff deeply"—maintains that cider should only be drunk beside an open fire of applewood logs:

> And preferably on an evening of storm and wetness, when the swish and sudden pattering of rain against the panes lend an added agreeable snugness to the cheerful scene within, where master and dame sit by the rosy hearth frying sausages in a pan laid on the embers.

This reminds one of the anecdote related by ex-Senator Beveridge in his Life of John Marshall. Justice Story told his wife that the justices of the Supreme Court were of a self-denying habit, never taking wine except in wet weather. "But it does

sometimes happen that the Chief Justice will say to me, when the cloth is removed, 'Brother Story, step to the window and see if it does not look like rain.' And if I tell him that the sun is shining brightly, Judge Marshall will sometimes reply, 'All the better, for our jurisdiction extends over so large a territory that the doctrine of chances makes it certain that it must be raining somewhere.'"

Our own theory about cider is that the time to drink it is when it reaches you; and if it hails from Chester County, so much the better.

We remember with gusto a little soliloquy on cider delivered by another friend of ours, as we both stood in a decent ordinary on Fulton Street, going through all the motions of jocularity and cheer. Cider (he said) is our refuge and strength Cider, he insisted, drawing from his pocket a clipping much tarnished with age, is a drink for men of reason and genteel nurture; a drink for such as desire to drink pleasantly, amiably, healthily, and with perseverance and yet retain the command and superintendence of their faculties. I have here (he continued) a clipping sent me by an eminent architect in the great city of Philadelphia (a city which it is a pleasure for me to contemplate by reason of the beauty and virtue of its women, the infinite vivacity and good temper of its men, the rectitudinal disposition of its highways)—I

have here (he exclaimed) a clipping sent me by an architect of fame, charming parts, and infinite cellarage, explaining the virtues of cider. Cider, this clipping asserts, produces a clearness of the complexion. It brightens the eye, particularly in women, conducing to the composition of generous compliment and all the social suavity that endears the intercourse of the sexes. Longevity, this extract maintains, is the result of application to good cider. The Rev. Martin Johnson, vicar of Dilwyn, in Herefordshire, from 1651 to 1698 (he read from his clipping), wrote:

> This parish, wherein sider is plentifull, hath many people that do enjoy this blessing of long life; neither are the aged bedridden or decrepit as elsewhere; next to God, wee ascribe it to our flourishing orchards, first that the bloomed trees in spring do not only sweeten but purify the ambient air; next, that they yield us plenty of rich and winy liquors, which do conduce very much to the constant health of our inhabitants. Their ordinary course is to breakfast and sup with toast and sider through the whole Lent; which heightens their appetites and creates in them durable strength to labour.

There was a pause, and our friend (he is a man of girth and with a brow bearing all the candor of a life of intense thought) leaned against the mahogany counter.

That is very fine, we said, draining our chalice,

and feeling brightness of eye, length of years, and durable strength to labour added to our person. In the meantime (we said) why do you not drink the rich and winy liquor which your vessel contains?

He folded up his clipping and put it away with a sigh.

I always have to read that first, he said, to make the damned stuff palatable. It will be ten years, he said, before the friend who sent me that clipping will have to drink any cider.

ONE-NIGHT STANDS

TO THOSE looking for an exhilarating vacation let us commend a week of "trouping" on one-night stands with a theatrical company, which mirthful experience has just been ours. We went along in the very lowly capacity of co-author, which placed us somewhat beneath the stage hands as far as dignity was concerned; and we flatter ourself that we have learned our station and observe it with due humility. The first task of the director who stages a play is to let the author know where he gets off. This was accomplished in our case by an argument concerning a speech in the play where one of the characters remarks, "I propose to send a mental message to Eliza." This sounds (we contend) quite a harmless sentiment, but the director insisted that the person speaking, being an Englishman of studious disposition, would not say anything so inaccurate. "He would use much more correct language," said the director. "He ought to say 'I *purpose* to send.'" We balked mildly at this. "All right," said our mentor. "The trouble with you is you

don't know any English. I'll send you a copy of the Century dictionary."

This gentleman carried purism to almost extravagant lengths. He objected to the customary pronunciation of "jew's harp," insisting that the word should be "juice-harp," and instructing the actor who mentioned this innocent instrument of melody to write it down so in his script. When the dress rehearsal came round, he was surveying the "set" for the first act with considerable complacence. This scenery was intended to represent a very ancient English inn at Stratford-on-Avon, and one of the authors was heard to remark softly that it looked more like a broker's office on Wall Street. But the director was unshaken. "There's an old English inn up at Larchmont," said he, "and this looks a good deal like it, so I guess we're all right."

Let any one who imagines the actor's life is one of bevo and skittles sally along with a new play on its try-out in the one-night circuit. When one sees the delightful humour, fortitude, and high spirits with which the players face their task he gains a new respect for the profession. It is with a sense of shame that the wincing author hears his lines repeated night after night—lines that seem to him to have grown so stale and disreputably stupid, and which the ingenuity of the players contrives to instill with life. With a sense of shame indeed does

he reflect that because one day long ago he was struck with a preposterous idea, here are honest folk depending on it to earn daily bread and travelling on a rainy day on a local train on the Central New England Railway; here are 800 people in Saratoga Springs filing into a theatre with naïve expectation on their faces. Amusing things happen faster than he can stay to count them. A fire breaks out in a cigar store a few minutes before theatre time. It is extinguished immediately, but half the town has rushed down to see the excitement. The cigar store is almost next door to the theatre, and the crowd sees the lighted sign and drops in to give the show the once-over, thus giving one a capacity house. Then there are the amusing accidents that happen on the stage, due to the inevitable confusion of one-night stands with long jumps each day, when scenery and props arrive at the theatre barely in time to be set up. In the third act one of the characters has to take his trousers out of a handbag. He opens the bag, but by some error no garments are within. Heavens! has the stage manager mixed up the bags? He has only one hope. The girlish heroine's luggage is also on the stage, and our comedian dashes over and finds his trousers in her bag. This casts a most sinister imputation on the adorable heroine, but our friend (blessings on him) contrives it so delicately that the audience doesn't

get wise. Then doors that are supposed to be locked have a habit of swinging open, and the luckless heroine, ready to say furiously to the hero. "*Will* you unlock the door?" finds herself facing an open doorway and has to invent a line to get herself off the stage.

Going on the road is a very humanizing experience and one gathers a considerable respect for the small towns one visits. They are so brisk, so proud in their local achievements, so prosperous and so full of attractive shop-windows. When one finds in Johnstown, N. Y., for instance, a bookshop with almost as well-assorted a stock as one would see here in Philadelphia; or in Gloversville and Newburgh public libraries that would be a credit to any large city, one realizes the great tide of public intelligence that has risen perceptibly in recent years. At the hotel in Gloversville the proprietress assured us that "an English duke" had just left who told her that he preferred her hotel to the Biltmore in New York. We rather wondered about this English duke, but we looked him up on the register and found that he was Sir H. Urnick of Fownes Brothers, the glove manufacturers, who have a factory in Gloversville. But then, being a glove manufacturer, he may have been kidding her, as the low comedian of our troupe observed. But the local pride of the small town is a genial thing. It may always be noted

in the barber shops. The small-town barber knows his customers and when a strange face appears to be shaved on the afternoon when the bills are announcing a play, he puts two and two together. "Are you with that show?" he asks; and being answered in the affirmative (one naturally would not admit that one is merely there in the frugal capacity of co-author, and hopes that he will imagine that such a face might conceivably belong to the low comedian) he proceeds to expound the favourite doctrine that this is a wise burg. "Yes," he says, "folks here are pretty cagy. If your show can get by here you needn't worry about New York. Believe me, if you get a hand here you can go right down to Broadway. I always take in the shows, and I've heard lots of actors say this town is harder to please than any place they ever played."

One gets a new viewpoint on many matters by a week of one-night stands. Theatrical billboards, for instance. We had always thought that they were a defacement to a town and cluttered up blank spaces in an unseemly way. But when you are trouping, the first thing you do, after registering at the hotel, is to go out and scout round the town yearning for billboards and complaining because there aren't enough of them. You meet another member of the company on the same errand and say, "I don't see much paper out," this

being the technical phrase. You both agree that the advance agent must be loafing. Then you set out to see what opposition you are playing against, and emit groans on learning that "The Million Dollar Doll in Paris" is also in town, or "Harry Bulger's Girly Show" will be there the following evening, or Mack Sennett's Bathing Beauties in Person. "That's the kind of stuff they fall for," said the other author mournfully, and you hustle around to the box office to see whether the ticket rack is still full of unsold pasteboard.

At this time of year, when all the metropolitan theatres are crowded and there are some thirty plays cruising round in the offing waiting for a chance to get into New York and praying that some show now there will "flop," one crosses the trail of many other wandering troupes that are battering about from town to town. In remote Johnstown, N. Y., which can only be reached by trolley and where there is no hotel (but a very fine large theatre) one finds that Miss Grace George is to be the next attraction. On the train to Saratoga one rides on the same train with the Million Dollar Doll, and those who have seen her "paper" on the billboards in Newburgh or Poughkeepsie keep an attentive optic open for the lady herself to see how nearly she lives up to her lithographs. And if the passerby should see a lighted window in the hotel glimmering at two in the morning, he

will probably aver that there are some of those light-hearted "show people" carousing over a flagon. Little does he suspect that long after the tranquil thespians have gone to their well-earned hay, the miserable authors of the trying-out piece may be vigiling together, trying to dope out a new scene for the third act. The saying is not new, but it comes frequently to the lips of the one-night stander—It's a great life if you don't weaken.

THE OWL TRAIN

ACROSS the cold moonlit landscapes, while good folk are at home curling their toes in the warm bottom of the bed, the Owl trains rumble with a gentle drone, neither fast nor slow.

There are several Owl trains with which we have been familiar. One, rather aristocratic of its kind, is the caravan of sleeping cars that leaves New York at midnight and deposits hustling business men of the most aggressive type at the South Station, Boston. After a desolate progress full of incredible jerks and jolts these pilgrims reach this dampest, darkest, and most Arctic of all terminals about the time the morning codfish begins to warm his bosom on the gridirons of the sacred city. Another, a terrible nocturnal prowler, slips darkly away from Albany about 1 A. M., and rambles disconsolately and with shrill wailings along the West Shore line. Below the grim Palisades of the Hudson it wakes painful echoes. Its first six units, as far as one can see in the dark, are blind express cars, containing milk cans and cof-

fins. We once boarded it at Kingston, and after uneasy slumber across two facing seats found ourself impaled upon Weehawken three hours later. There one treads dubiously upon a ferryboat in the fog and brume of dawn, ungluing eyelids in the bleak dividing pressure of the river breeze.

But the Owl train we propose to celebrate is the vehicle that departs modestly from the crypt of the Pennsylvania Station in New York at half-past midnight and emits blood-shot wanderers at West Philadelphia at 3:16 in the morning. The railroad company, which thinks these problems out with nice care, lulls the passengers into unconsciousness of their woes not only by a gentle and even gait, a progress almost tender in its carefully modulated repression of speed, but also by keeping the cars at such an amazing heat that the victims promptly fade into a swoon. Nowhere will you see a more complete abandonment to the wild postures of fatigue and despair than in the pathetic sprawl of these human forms upon the simmering plush settees. A hot eddy of some varnish-tinctured vapour—certainly not air—rises from under the seats and wraps the traveller in a nightmarish trance. Occasionally he starts wildly from his dream and glares frightfully through the misted pane. It is the custom of the trainmen, who tiptoe softly through the cars, never to disturb their clients by calling out the

names of stations. When New Brunswick is reached many think that they have arrived at West Philadelphia, or (worse still) have been carried on to Wilmington. They rush desperately to the bracing chill of the platform to learn where they are. There is a mood of mystery about this Owl of ours. The trainmen take a quaint delight in keeping the actual whereabouts of the caravan a merciful secret.

Oddly assorted people appear on this train. Occasional haughty revellers, in evening dress and opera capes, appear among the humbler voyagers. For a time they stay on their dignity: sit bravely upright and talk with apparent intelligence. Then the drowsy poison of that stifled atmosphere overcomes them, too, and they fall into the weakness of their brethren. They turn over the opposing seat, elevate their nobler shins, and droop languid heads over the ticklish plush chair-back. Strange aliens lie spread over the seats. Nowhere will you see so many faces of curious foreign carving. It seems as though many desperate exiles, who never travel by day, use the Owl for moving obscurely from city to city. This particular train is bound south to Washington, and at least half its tenants are citizens of colour. Even the endless gaiety of our dusky brother is not proof against the venomous exhaustion of that boxed-in suffocation. The ladies of his race are comfortably prepared for the

hardships of the route. They wrap themselves in huge fur coats and all have sofa cushions to recline on. Even in an all-night session of Congress you will hardly note so complete an abandonment of disillusion, weariness, and cynical despair as is written upon the blank faces all down the aisle. Even the will-power of a George Creel or a Will H. Hays would droop before this three-hour ordeal. Professor Einstein, who talks so delightfully of discarding Time and Space, might here reconsider his theories if he brooded, baking gradually upward, on the hot green plush.

This genial Owl is not supposed to stop at North Philadelphia, but it always does. By this time Philadelphia passengers are awake and gathered in the cold vestibules, panting for escape. Some of them, against the rules of the train, manage to escape on the North Philadelphia platform. The rest, standing huddled over the swaying couplings, find the leisurely transit to West Philadelphia as long as the other segments of the ride put together. Stoically, and beyond the power of words, they lean on one another. At last the train slides down a grade. In the dark and picturesque tunnel of the West Philadelphia station, through thick mists of steam where the glow of the fire box paints the fog a golden rose, they grope and find the ancient stairs. Then they stagger off to seek a lonely car or a night-hawk taxi.

SAFETY PINS

LIGATURE of infancy, healing engine of emergency, base and mainstay of our civilization—we celebrate the safety pin.

What would we do without safety pins? Is it not odd to think, looking about us on our fellowmen (bearded realtors, ejaculating poets, plump and ruddy policemen, even the cheerful dusky creature who runs the elevator and whistles "Oh, What a Pal Was Mary" as the clock draws near 6 P. M.)—all these were first housed and swaddled and made seemly with a paper of safety pins. How is it that the inventor who first conferred this great gift on the world is not known by name for the admiration and applause of posterity? Was it not the safety pin that made the world safe for infancy?

There will be some, mayhap, to set up the button as rival to the safety pin in service to humanity. But our homage bends toward the former. Not only was it our shield and buckler when we were too puny and impish to help ourselves, but it is also (now we are parent) symbol of many a hard-

fought field, where we have campaigned all over the white counterpane of a large bed to establish an urchin in his proper gear, while he kicked and scrambled, witless of our dismay. It is fortunate, pardee, that human memory does not extend backward to the safety pin era—happily the recording carbon sheet of the mind is not inserted on the roller of experience until after the singular humiliations of earliest childhood have passed. Otherwise our first recollection would doubtless be of the grimly flushed large face of a resolute parent, bending hotly downward in effort to make both ends meet while we wambled and waggled in innocent, maddening sport. In those days when life was (as George Herbert puts it) "assorted sorrows, anguish of all sizes," the safety pin was the only thing that raised us above the bandar-log. No wonder the antique schoolmen used to enjoy computing the number of angels that might dance on the point of a pin. But only arch-angels would be worthy to pirouette on a safety pin, which is indeed mightier than the sword. When Adam delved and Eve did spin, what did they do for a safety pin?

Great is the stride when an infant passes from the safety pin period to the age of buttons. There are three ages of human beings in this matter: (1) Safety pins, (2) Buttons, (3) Studs, or (for females) Hooks and Eyes. Now there is an interim in

the life of man when he passes away from safety pins, and, for a season, knows them not—save as mere convenience in case of breakdown. He thinks of them, in his antic bachelor years, as merely the wrecking train of the sartorial system, a casual conjunction for pyjamas, or an impromptu hoist for smallclothes. Ah! with humility and gratitude he greets them again later, seeing them at their true worth, the symbol of integration for the whole social fabric. Women, with their intuitive wisdom, are more subtle in this subject. They never wholly outgrow safety pins, and though they love to ornament them with jewellery, precious metal, and enamels, they are naught but safety pins after all. Some ingenious philosopher could write a full tractate on woman in her relation to pins—hairpins, clothes pins, rolling pins, hatpins.

Only a bachelor, as we have implied, scoffs at pins. Hamlet remarked, after seeing the ghost, and not having any Sir Oliver Lodge handy to reassure him, that he did not value his life at a pin's fee. Pope, we believe, coined the contemptuous phrase, "I care not a pin." The pin has never been done justice in the world of poetry. As one might say, the pin has had no Pindar. Of course there is the old saw about see a pin and pick it up, all the day you'll have good luck. This couplet, barbarous as it is in its false rhyme, points (as Mother Goose generally does) to a profound truth. When you see

a pin, you must pick it up. In other words, it is on the floor, where pins generally are. Their instinctive affinity for terra firma makes one wonder why they, rather than the apple, did not suggest the law of gravitation to someone long before Newton.

Incidentally, of course, the reason why Adam and Eve were forbidden to pick the apple was that it was supposed to stay on the tree until it fell, and Adam would then have had the credit of spotting the principle of gravitation.

Much more might be said about pins, touching upon their curious capacity for disappearing, superstitions concerning them, usefulness of hatpins or hairpins as pipe-cleaners, usefulness of pins to schoolboys, both when bent for fishing and when filed to an extra point for use on the boy in the seat in front (honouring him in the breech, as Hamlet would have said) and their curious habits of turning up in unexpected places, undoubtedly caught by pins in their long association with the lovelier sex. But of these useful hyphens of raiment we will merely conclude by saying that those interested in the pin industry will probably emigrate to England, for we learn from the Encyclopædia Britannica that in that happy island pins are cleaned by being boiled in weak beer. Let it not be forgotten, however, that of all kinds, the safety is the King Pin.

CONFESSIONS OF A "COLYUMIST"

I CANNOT imagine any pleasant job so full of pangs, or any painful job so full of pleasures, as the task of conducting a newspaper column.

The colyumist, when he begins his job, is disheartened because nobody notices it. He soon outgrows this, and is disheartened because too many people notice it, and he imagines that all see the paltriness of it as plainly as he does. There is nothing so amazing to him as to find that any one really enjoys his "stuff." Poor soul, he remembers how he groaned over it at his desk. He remembers the hours he sat with lack-lustre eye and addled brain, brooding at the sluttish typewriter. He remembers the flush of shame that tingled him as he walked sadly homeward, thinking of some atrocious inanity he had sent upstairs to the composing-room. It is a job that engenders a healthy humility.

I had always wanted to have a try at writing a column. Heaven help me, I think I had an idea

that I was born for the job. I may as well be candid. There was a time when I seriously thought of inserting the following ad in a Philadelphia newspaper. I find a memorandum of it in my scrapbook:

HUMORIST: Young and untamed, lineal descendent of Eugene Field, Frank Stockton, and François Rabelais, desires to run a column in a Philadelphia newspaper.

Said Humorist can also supply excellent veins of philosophy, poetry, satire, uplift, glad material and indiscriminate musings. Remarkable opportunity for any newspaper desiring a really unusual editorial feature. Address HUMORIST, etc.

So besotted was I, I would have paid to have this printed if I had not been counselled by an older and wiser head.

I instance this to show that the colyumist is likely to begin his job with the conception that it is to be a perpetual uproar of mirth and high spirits. This lasts about a week. He then learns, in secret, to take it rather seriously. He has to deal with the most elusive and grotesque material he knows—his own mind; and the unhappy creature, everlastingly probing himself in the hope of discovering what is so rare in minds (a thought) is likely to end in a ferment of bitterness. The happiest times in life are when one can just live along and enjoy things as they happen. If you

have to be endlessly speculating, watching, and making mental notes, your brain-gears soon get a hot box. The original of all paragraphers—Ecclesiastes—came very near ending as a complete cynic; though in what F. P. A. would call his "lastline," he managed to wriggle into a more hopeful mood.

The first valuable discovery that the colyumist is likely to make is that all minds are very much the same. The doctors tell us that all patent medicines are built on a stock formula—a sedative, a purge, and a bitter. If you are to make steady column-topers out of your readers, your daily dose must, as far as possible, average up to that same prescription. If you employ the purge all the time, or the sedative, or the acid, your clients will soon ask for something with another label.

Don Marquis once wrote an admirable little poem called "A Colyumist's Prayer." Mr. Marquis, who is the king of all colyumists, realizes that there is what one may call a religious side in colyumizing. It is hard to get the colyumist to admit this, for he fears spoofing worse than the devil; but it is eminently true. If I were the owner of a newspaper, I think I would have painted up on the wall of the city room the following words from Isaiah, the best of all watchwords for all who write:

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

The most painful privilege of the colyumist's job is the number of people who drop in to see him, usually when he is imprecating his way toward the hour of going to press. This is all a part of the great and salutary human instinct against work. When people see a man toiling, they have an irresistible impulse to crowd round and stop him. They seem to imagine that he has been put there on purpose to help them solve their problems, to find a job for their friend from Harrisburg, or to tell them how to find a publisher for their poems. Unhappily, their victim being merely human, is likely to grow a bit snappish under infliction. Yet now and then he gets a glimpse into a human vexation so sincere, so honest, and so moving that he turns away from the typewriter with a sigh. He wonders how one dare approach the chronicling of this muddled panorama with anything but humility and despair. Frank Harris once said of Oscar Wilde: "If England insists on treating her criminals like this, she doesn't deserve to have any." Similarly, if the public insists on bringing its woes to its colyumists, it doesn't deserve to have any colyumists. Then the battered jester turns again to his machine and ticks off something like this:

We have heard of ladies who have been tempted beyond their strength. We have also seen some who have been strengthened beyond their temptation.

Of course there are good days, too. (This is not one of them.) Days when the whole course of the news seems planned for the benefit of the chaffish and irreverent commentator. When Governor Hobby of Texas issues a call for the state cavalry. When one of your clients drops in, in the goodness of his heart, to give you his own definition of a pessimist—a pessimist, he says, is a man who wears both belt and suspenders. When a big jewellery firm in the city puts out a large ad—

Bailey, Banks & Biddle Company
Watches for Women
Of Superior Design and Perfection
of Movement

all that one needs to do to that is to write over it the caption

SO DO WE ALL

and pass on to the next paragraph.

The more a colyumist is out on the streets, making himself the reporter of the moods and oddities of men, the better his stuff will be. It seems to me that his job ought to be good training for a novelist, as it teaches him a habit of human sensitiveness. He becomes filled with an extraordinary

curiosity about the motives and purposes of the people he sees. The other afternoon I was very much struck by the unconscious pathos of a little, gentle-eyed old man who was standing on Chestnut Street studying a pocket note-book. His umbrella leaned against a shop window, on the sill of which he had laid a carefully rolled-up newspaper. By his feet was a neat leather brief-case, plumply filled with contents not discernible. There he stood (a sort of unsuccessful Cyrus Curtis), very diminutive, his gray hair rather long abaft his neck, his yellowish straw hat (with curly brim) tilted backward as though in perplexity, his timid and absorbed blue eyes poring over his memorandum-book which was full of pencilled notes. He had a slightly unkempt, brief beard and whiskers, his cheek-bones pinkish, his linen a little frayed. There was something strangely pathetic about him, and I would have given much to have been able to speak to him. I halted at a window farther down the street and studied him; then returned to pass him again, and watched him patiently. He stood quite absorbed, and was still there when I went on.

That is just one of the thousands of vivid little pictures one sees on the city streets day by day. To catch some hint of the meaning of all this, to present a few scrawled notes of the amazing interest and colour of the city's life, this is the

colyumist's task as I see it. It is a task not a whit less worthy, less painful, or less baffling than that of the most conscientious novelist. And it is carried on in surroundings of extraordinary stimulation and difficulty. It is heart-racking to struggle day by day, amid incessant interruption and mêlée, to snatch out of the hurly-burly some shreds of humour or pathos or (dare one say?) beauty, and phrase them intelligibly.

But it is fun. One never buys a package of tobacco, crosses a city square, enters a trolley-car or studies a shop-window without trying, in a baffled, hopeless way, to peer through the frontage of the experience, to find some glimmer of the thoughts, emotions, and meanings behind. And in the long run such a habit of inquiry must bear fruit in understanding and sympathy. Joseph Conrad (who seems, by the way, to be more read by newspaper men than any other writer) put very nobly the pinnacle of all scribblers' dreams when he said that human affairs deserve the tribute of "a sigh which is not a sob, a smile which is not a grin."

So much, with apology, for the ideals of the colyumist, if he be permitted to speak truth without fear of mockery. Of course in the actual process and travail of his job you will find him far different. You may know him by a sunken, brooding eye; clothing marred by much tobacco, and a

chafed and tetchy humour toward the hour of 5 P. M. Having bitterly schooled himself to see men as paragraphs walking, he finds that his most august musings have a habit of stewing themselves down to some ferocious or jocular three-line comment. He may yearn desperately to compose a really thrilling poem that will speak his passionate soul; to churn up from the typewriter some lyric that will rock with blue seas and frantic hearts; he finds himself allaying the frenzy with some jovial sneer at Henry Ford or a yell about the High Cost of Living. Poor soul, he is like one condemned to harangue the vast, idiotic world through a keyhole, whence his anguish issues thin and faint. Yet who will say that all his labour is wholly vain? Perhaps some day the government will crown a Colyumist Laureate, some majestic sage with ancient patient blue eyes and a snowy beard nobly stained with nicotine, whose utterances will be heeded with shuddering respect. All minor colyumists will wear robes and sandals; they will be an order of scoffing friars; people will run to them on crowded streets to lay before them the sorrows and absurdities of men. And in that day

> The meanest paragraph that blows will give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for sneers.

MOVING

MAN, we suspect, is the only animal capable of persuading himself that his hardships are medicine to the soul, of flattering himself into a conviction that some mortal spasm was a fortifying discipline.

Having just moved our household goods for the fourth time in four years, we now find ourself in the singular state of trying to believe that the horrors of the event have added to our supply of spiritual resignation. Well, let us see.

The brutal task of taking one's home on trek is (we can argue) a stirring tonic, a kind of private rehearsal of the Last Judgment, when the sheep shall be divided from the shoats. What could be a more convincing reminder of the instability of man's affairs than the harrowing upheaval of our cherished properties? Those dark angels, the moving men, how heartless they seem in their brisk and resolute dispassion—yet how exactly they prefigure the implacable sternness of the ultimate shepherds. A strange life is theirs, taking them day after day into the bosom of homes pros-

trated by the emigrating throe. Does this matter-of-fact bearing conceal an infinite tenderness, a pity that dare not show itself for fear of unmanly collapse? Are they secretly broken by the sight of the desolate nursery, the dismantled crib, the forgotten clockwork monkey lying in a corner of the cupboard where the helpless Urchin laid it with care before he and his smaller sister were deported, to be out of the way in the final storm? Does the o'ermastering pathos of a modest household turned inside out, its tender vitals displayed to the passing world, wring their breasts? Stoic men, if so, they well conceal their pangs.

They have one hopelessly at a disadvantage. In the interval that always elapses before the arrival of the second van, there is a little social chat and utterance of reminiscences. There is a lively snapping of matchheads on thumbnails, and seated at ease in the débris of the dismantled living room our friends will tell of the splendour of some households they have moved before. The thirty-eight barrels of gilt porcelain, the twenty cases of oil paintings, the satinwood grand piano that their spines twinge to recall. Once our furnitures were moved by a crew of lusty athletes who had previously done the same for Mr. Ivy Lee, and while we sat in shamed silence we heard the tale of Mr. Lee's noble possessions. Of what avail would it have been for us to protest that we love

our stuff as much as Mr. Lee did his? No, we had a horrid impulse to cry apology, and beg them to hurl the things into the van anyhow, just to end the agony.

This interval of social chat being prolonged by the blizzard, the talk is likely to take a more ominous turn. We are told how, only last week, a sister van was hit by a train at a crossing and carried a hundred yards on the engine pilot. Two of the men were killed, though one of these lived from eleven o'clock Saturday morning until eleven o'clock Monday night. How, after hearing this, can one ask what happened to the furniture, even if one is indecent enough to think of it? Then one learns of another of the fleet, stalled in a drift on the way to Harrisburg, and hasn't been heard from for forty-eight hours. Sitting in subdued silence, one remembers something about "moving accidents by flood and field," and thanks fortune that these pitiful oddments are only going to a storage warehouse, not to be transported thence until the kindly season of spring.

But packing for storage instead of for moving implies subtler and more painful anguishes. Here indeed we have a tonic for the soul, for election must be made among one's belongings: which are to be stored, and which to accompany? Take the subject of books for instance. Horrid hesitation: can we subsist for four or five months on nothing

but the *Oxford Book of English Verse* and Boswell's Johnson? Suppose we want to look up a quotation, in those late hours of the night when all really worth-while reading is done? Our memory is knitted with a wide mesh. Suppose we want to be sure just what it was that Shakespeare said happened to him in his "sessions of sweet silent thought," what are we going to do? We will have to fall back on the customary recourse of the minor poet—if you can't remember one of Shakespeare's sonnets, at least you can write one of your own instead. Speaking of literature, it is a curious thing that the essayists have so neglected this topic of moving. It would be pleasant to know how the good and the great have faced this peculiarly terrible crisis of domestic affairs. When the Bard himself moved back to Stratford after his years in London, what did he think about it? How did he get all his papers packed up, and did he, in mere weariness, destroy the half-done manuscripts of plays? Charles Lamb moved round London a good deal; did he never write of his experience?* We like to think of Emerson: did he ever move, and if so, how did he behave when the fatal day came? Did he sit on a packing case and utter sepulchral aphorisms? Think of Lord Bacon and how he would have crystallized the matter in a phrase.

*Yes! See his letter to Manning, March 28, 1809.

Of course in bachelor days moving may be a huge lark, a humorous escapade. We remember some high-spirited young men, three of them, who were moving their chattels from rooms on Twenty-first Street to a flat on Irving Place. Frugality was their necessary watchword, and they hired a pushcart in which to transport the dunnage. It was necessary to do this on Sunday, and one of the trio, more sensitive than the others, begged that they should rise and accomplish the public shame early in the morning, before the streets were alive. In particular, he begged, let the route be chosen to avoid a certain club on Gramercy Park where he had many friends, and where he was loath to be seen pushing his humble intimacies. The others, scenting sport, and brazenly hardy of spirit, contrived to delay the start on one pretext or another until the middle of the forenoon. Then, by main force, ignoring his bitter protest, they impelled the staggering vehicle, grossly overloaded, past the very door of the club my friend had wished to avoid. Here, by malicious inspiration, they tilted the wain to one side and strewed the paving with their property. They skipped nimbly round the corner, and with highly satisfactory laughter watched their blushing partner labouring dismally to collect the fragments. Some of his friends issuing from the club lent a hand, and the joy of the conspirators was complete.

But to the family man, moving is no such airy picnic. Sadly he goes through the last dismal rites and sees the modest fragments of his dominion hustled toward the cold sepulture of a motor van. Before the toughened bearing of the hirelings he doubts what manner to assume. Shall he stand at the front door and exhort them to particular care with each sentimental item, crying "Be careful with that little chair; that's the one the Urchin uses when he eats his evening prunes!" Or shall he adopt a gruesome sarcasm, hoping to awe them by conveying the impression that even if the whole van should be splintered in collision, he can get more at the nearest department store? Whatever policy he adopts, they will not be much impressed. For, when we handed our gratuity, not an ungenerous one, to the driver, asking him to divide it among the gang, we were startled to hear them burst into loud screams of mirth. We asked, grimly, the cause. It appeared that during the work one of our friends, apparently despairing of any pourboire appropriate to his own conceptions of reward, had sold his share of the tip to the driver for fifteen cents. We are not going to say how much he lost by so doing. But this gamble put the driver in such a good humour that we believe he will keep away from railroad crossings.

SURF FISHING

ALL day long you see them stand thigh-deep in the surf, fishing. Up on the beach each one has a large basket containing clams for bait, extra hooks and leaders, a little can of oil for the reel, and any particular doo-dads dear to the heart of the individual fisherman. And an old newspaper, all ready to protect the anticipated catch from the rays of the sun.

Some of them wear bathing suits; others rubber hip-boots, or simply old clothes that won't mind getting wet. If they are very full of swank they will have a leather belt with a socket to hold the butt of the rod. Every now and then you will see them pacing backward up the beach, reeling in the line. They will mutter something about a big strike that time, and he got away with the bait. With zealous care they spear some more clam on the hook, twisting it over and over the barb so as to be firmly impaled. Then, with careful precision, they fling the line with its heavy pyramid sinker far out beyond the line of breakers.

There they stand. What do they think about, one wonders? But what does any one think about when fishing? That is one of the happy pastimes that don't require much thinking. The long ridges of surf crumble about their knees and the sun and keen vital air lull them into a cheerful drowse of the faculties. Do they speculate on the never-ending fascination of the leaning walls of water, the rhythmical melody of the rasp and hiss of the water? Do they watch that indescribable beauty of the breaking wave, a sight as old as humankind and yet never so described that one who has not seen it could picture it?

The wave gathers height and speed as it moves toward the sand. It seems to pull itself together for the last plunge. The first wave that ever rolled up to a beach probably didn't break. It just slid. It was only the second wave that broke—curled over in that curious way. For our theory—which may be entirely wrong—is that the breaking is due to the undertow of previous waves. After a wave sprawls up on the beach, it runs swiftly back. This receding undercurrent—you can feel it very strongly if you are swimming just in front of a large wave about to break—digs in beneath the advancing hill of water. It cuts away the foundations of that hill, which naturally topples over at the crest.

The wave of water leans and hangs for a delay-

ing instant. The actual cascade may begin at one end and run along the length of the ridge; it may begin at both ends and twirl inward, meeting in the middle; it may (but very rarely) begin in the middle and work outward. As the billow is at its height, before it combs over, the fisherman sees the sunlight gleaming through it—an ecstasy of perfect lucid green, with the glimmer of yellow sand behind. Then, for a brief moment—so brief that the details can never be memorized—he sees a clear crystal screen of water falling forward. Another instant, and it is all a boil of snowy suds seething about his legs. He may watch it a thousand times, a million times; it will never be old, never wholly familiar. Colour varies from hour to hour, from day to day. Sometimes blue or violet, sometimes green-olive or gray. The backwash tugs at his boots, hollowing out little channels under his feet. The sun wraps him round like a mantle; the salt crusts and thickens in his hair. And then, when he has forgotten everything save the rhythm of the falling waves, there comes a sudden tug——

He reels in, and a few curious bathers stand still in the surf to see what he has got. They are inclined to be scornful. It is such a little fish! One would think that such a vast body of water would be ashamed to yield only so small a prize. Never mind. He has compensations they wot not of.

Moreover—although he would hardly admit it himself—the fishing business is only a pretext. How else could a grown man with grizzled hair have an excuse to stand all day paddling in the surf?

"IDOLATRY"

ONCE in a while, when the name of R. L. S. is mentioned in conversation, someone says to us: "Ah well, you're one of the Stevenson idolators, aren't you?" And this is said with a curious air of cynical superiority, as of one who has experienced all these things and is superbly tolerant of the shallow mind that can still admire Tusitala. His work (such people will generally tell you) was brilliant but "artificial" . . . and for the true certificated milk of the word one must come along to such modern giants as Dreiser and Hergesheimer and Cabell. For these artists, each in his due place, we have only the most genial respect. But when the passion of our youth is impugned as "idolatry" we feel in our spirit an intense weariness. We feel the pacifism of the wise and secretive mind that remains tacit when its most perfect inward certainties are assailed. One does not argue, for there are certain things not arguable. One shrugs. After all, what human gesture more eloquent (or more satisfying to the performer) than the shrug?

There is a little village on the skirts of the Forest of Fontainebleau (heavenly region of springtime and romance!) where the crystal-green eddies of the Loing slip under an old gray bridge with sharp angled piers of stone. Near the bridge is a quiet little inn, one of the many happy places in that country long frequented by artists for painting and "*villégiature*." Behind the inn is a garden beside the river-bank. The *salle à manger*, as in so many of those inns at Barbizon, Moret, and the other Fontainebleau villages, is panelled and frescoed with humorous and high-spirited impromptus done by visiting painters.

In the summer of 1876 an anxious rumour passed among the artist colonies. It was said that an American lady and her two children had arrived at Grez, and the young bohemians who regarded this region as their own sacred retreat were startled and alarmed. Were their chosen haunts to be invaded by tourists—and tourists of the disturbing sex? Among three happy irresponsibles this humorous anxiety was particularly acute. One of the trio was sent over to Grez as a scout, to spy out the situation and report. The emissary went, and failed to return. A second explorer was dispatched to study the problem. He, too, was swallowed up in silence. The third, impatiently waiting tidings from his faithless friends, set out to make an end of this mystery. He reached the

inn at dusk: it was a gentle summer evening; the windows were open to the tender air; lamps were lit within, and a merry party sat at dinner. Through the open window the suspicious venturer saw the recreant ambassadors, gay with laughter. And there, sitting in the lamplight, was the American lady—a slender, thoughtful enchantress with eyes as dark and glowing as the wine. Thus it was that Robert Louis Stevenson first saw Fanny Osbourne.

A few days later Mrs. Osbourne's eighteen-year-old daughter wrote in a letter: "There is a young Scotchman here, a Mr. Stevenson. He is such a nice-looking ugly man, and I would rather listen to him talk than read the most interesting book. . . . Mama is ever so much better and is getting prettier every day."

The Life of Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson, written by her sister Mrs. Sanchez (the mother of "little Louis Sanchez on the beach at Monterey" remembered by lovers of *A Child's Garden of Verses*) is a book that none of the so-called idolators will want to overlook. The romantic excitements of R. L. S.'s youth were tame indeed compared to those of Fanny Van de Grift. R. L. S. had been thrilled enough by a few nights spent in the dark with the docile ass of the Cevennes; but here was one, sprung from sober Philadelphia blood, born in Indianapolis and baptized by Henry Ward

Beecher, who had pioneered across the fabled Isthmus, lived in the roaring mining camps of Nevada, worked for a dressmaker in Frisco, and venturously taken her young children to Belgium and France to study art. She had been married at seventeen, had already once thought herself to be a widow in fact by the temporary disappearance of her first husband; and was now, after enduring repeated infidelities, prepared to make herself a widow in law. Daring horsewoman, a good shot, a supreme cook, artist, writer, and a very Gene Stratton-Porter among flowers, fearless, beautiful, and of unique charm—where could another woman have been found so marvellously gifted to be the wife of a romancer? It seems odd that Philadelphia and Edinburgh, the two most conservatively minded cities of the Anglo-Saxon earth, should have combined to produce this, the most radiant pair of adventurers in our recent annals.

The reading of this delightful book has taken us back into the very pang and felicity of our first great passion—our idolatry, if you will—which we are proud here and now to re-avow. When was there ever a happier or more wholesome worship for a boy than the Stevenson mania on which so many of this generation grew up? We were the luckier in that our zeal was shared in all its gusto and particularity by a lean, long-legged, sallow-faced, brown-eyed eccentric (himself incredibly

Stevensonian in appearance) with whom we lay afield in our later teens, reading R. L. S. aloud by the banks of a small stream which we vowed should become famous in the world of letters. And so it has, though not by our efforts, which was what we had designed; for at the crystal headwater of that same creek was penned *The Amenities of Book Collecting*, that enchanting volume of bookish essays which has swelled the correspondence of a Philadelphia business man to insane proportions, and even brought him offers from three newspapers to conduct a book page. It seems appropriate to the present chronicler that in a quiet library overlooking the clear fount and origin of dear Darby Creek there are several of the most cherished association volumes of R. L. S. —we think particularly of the *Child's Garden of Verses* which he gave to Cummy, and the manuscript of little "Smoutie's" very first book, the *History of Moses*.

Was there ever a more joyous covenant of affection than that of Mifflin McGill and ourself in our boyish madness for Tusitala? It is a happy circumstance, we say, for a youth, before the multiplying responsibilities of maturity press upon him, to pour out his enthusiasm in an obsession such as that; and when this passion can be shared and doubled and knitted in partnership with an

equally freakish, insane, and innocent idiot (such as our generously mad friend Mifflin) admirable adventures are sure to follow. The quest begun on Darby Creek took us later on an all-summer progress among places in England and Scotland hallowed to us by association with R. L. S. Never, in any young lives past or to come, could there be an instant of purer excitement and glory than when, after bicycling hotly all day with the blue outline of Arthur's Seat apparently always receding before us, we trundled grimly into Auld Reekie and set out for the old Stevenson home at 17 Heriot Row, halting only to bestow our pneumatic steeds in the nearest and humblest available hostelry. There (for we found the house empty and "To Let") we sat on the doorstep evening by evening, smoking in the long northern twilight and spinning our youthful dreams. This lust for hunting out our favourite author's footsteps even led one of the pair to a place perhaps never visited by any other Stevensonian pilgrim —old Cockfield Rectory, in Suffolk, where Mrs. Sitwell and Sidney Colvin first met the bright-eyed Scotch boy in 1873. The tracker of footprints remembers how kind were the then occupants of the old rectory, and how, in a daze of awe, he trod the green and tranquil lawn and hastened to visit a cottage near by where there was an ancient rustic who had been coachman at the rec-

tory when R. L. S. stayed there, fabled to retain some pithy recollection. Alas, the Suffolk ancient, eager enough to share tobacco and speech, would only mull over his memories of a previous rector, describing how it had fallen to him to prepare the good man for burial; how he smiled in death and his cheeks were as rosy as a babe's.

It would take many pages to narrate all the bypaths and happy excursions trod by these simple youths in their quest of the immortal Louis. The memories come bustling, and one knows not where to stop. The supreme adventure, for one of the pair, lay in the kindness of Sir Sidney Colvin. To this prince of gentlemen and scholars one of these lads wrote, sending his letter (with subtle cunning) from a village in Suffolk only a few miles from Sir Sidney's boyhood home. He calculated that this might arouse the interest of Sir Sidney whom he knew to be cruelly badgered with letters from enthusiasts; and fortune turned in his favour, granting him numerous ecstatic visits to Sir Sidney and Lady Colvin and much unwarranted generosity. But, since our mind has been turned in this direction by Mrs. Sanchez's book, it might be appropriate to add that one of the most thrilling moments in the crusade was a season of April days spent beside the green and stripling Loing, in the Forest of Fontainebleau region, visiting those lovely French villages where

R. L. S. roamed as a young man, crowned by an afternoon at Grez. One remembers the old gray bridge across the eddying water, and the door of the inn where the young pilgrim lingered, trying to visualize scenes of thirty-five years before.

It is not mere idolatry when the hearts of the young are haunted by such spells. There was some real divinity behind the enchantment, some marvellous essence that made all roads Tusitala trod the Road of Loving Hearts. In these matters we would trust the simple Samoans to come nearer the truth than our cynic friend in Greenwich Village. The magic of that great name abides unimpaired.

IF BUYING A MEAL WERE LIKE BUYING A HOUSE

This Indenture

between A. B., an innkeeper, organized and existing under the laws of good cooking, party of the first part, and C. D., party of the second part, witnesseth:

That the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of $1.50, lawful money of the United States, paid by the said party of the second part, does hereby grant and release unto the said C. D., and his heirs, administrators, and assigns forever,

All that certain group, parcels, or allotments of foods, viands, or victuals, situate or to be spread, served, and garnished upon the premises of said A. B., shown and known and commonly designed as one square meal, table d'hôte, together with the drinking water, napkin, ash tray,

finger-bowl and hat-and-coat-hanging privileges or easements appurtenant thereto.

And Together With the rights, privileges, and opportunities (as an easement additionally appurtenant to the meal above nominated) to partake, eat, enjoy, and be nourished upon said victuals, and to call for extra pats, parcels, or portions of butter.

Subject to the following restrictions, to wit: That neither the party of the second part, nor his heirs, executors, or assigns, will feast immoderately upon onions, to the confusion of his neighbours; nor will the said C. D. or his guests smoke any form of tobacco other than cigars and cigarettes, the instrument commonly known as a pipe being offensive to the head waiter (a man of delicate nurture); nor will said party of the second part covet, retain, nor seek to remove any knives, forks, spoons, or other tableware whatsoever; nor is anything said or implied or otherwise intimated in this covenant to be construed as permitting the party of the second part to carry on loud laughter, song, carnival, nor social uproar; nor unnecessarily, further than is tactful for the procurement of expeditious attention, to endear himself to or otherwise cajole, compliment, and ingratiate the waitress.

And Furthermore, that title to said Meal does not pass until the party of the second part has conveyed, of his mansuetude and proper charity, a gratuity, fee, honorarium, lagniappe, pourboire, easement or tip of not less than 15 per cent. of the price of said Meal; which easement, while customarily spoken of as a free-will grant or gratuity, is to be constructively regarded as an entail and a necessary encumbrance upon said Meal.

And the said party of the first part covenants with the said party of the second part as follows: That the said C. D. is seized of the said Meal in fee simple, and shall quietly enjoy said Meal subject to the covenants and restrictions and encumbrances hereinbefore set out, subject to the good pleasure of the Head Waiter.

In Witness Whereof these presents are signed.

(*LOC. SIG.*)

ON VISITING BOOKSHOPS

IT IS a curious thing that so many people only go into a bookshop when they happen to need some particular book. Do they never drop in for a little innocent carouse and refreshment? There are some knightly souls who even go so far as to make their visits to bookshops a kind of chivalrous errantry at large. They go in not because they need any certain volume, but because they feel that there may be some book that needs them. Some wistful, little forgotten sheaf of loveliness, long pining away on an upper shelf—why not ride up, fling her across your charger (or your charge account), and gallop away. Be a little knightly, you booklovers!

The lack of intelligence with which people use bookshops is, one supposes, no more flagrant than the lack of intelligence with which we use all the rest of the machinery of civilization. In this age, and particularly in this city, we haven't time to be intelligent.

A queer thing about books, if you open your heart to them, is the instant and irresistible way

they follow you with their appeal. You know at once, if you are clairvoyant in these matters (librevoyant, one might say), when you have met your book. You may dally and evade, you may go on about your affairs, but the paragraph of prose your eye fell upon, or the snatch of verses, or perhaps only the spirit and flavour of the volume, more divined than reasonably noted, will follow you. A few lines glimpsed on a page may alter your whole trend of thought for the day, reverse the currents of the mind, change the profile of the city. The other evening, in a subway car, we were reading Walter de la Mare's interesting little essay about Rupert Brooke. His discussion of children, their dreaming ways, their exalted simplicity and absorption, changed the whole tenor of our voyage by some magical chemistry of thought. It was no longer a wild, barbaric struggle with our fellowmen, but a venture of faith and recompense, taking us home to the bedtime of a child.

The moment when one meets a book and knows, beyond shadow of doubt, that that book must be his—not necessarily now, but some time—is among the happiest excitements of the spirit. An indescribable virtue effuses from some books. One can feel the radiations of an honest book long before one sees it, if one has a sensitive pulse for such affairs. Its honour and truth will speak through the advertising. Its mind and heart will

cry out even underneath the extravagance of jacket-blurbings. Some shrewd soul, who understands books, remarked some time ago on the editorial page of the *Sun's* book review that no superlative on a jacket had ever done the book an atom of good. He was right, as far as the true bookster is concerned. We choose our dinner not by the wrappers, but by the veining and gristle of the meat within. The other day, prowling about a bookshop, we came upon two paper-bound copies of a little book of poems by Alice Meynell. They had been there for at least two years. We had seen them before, a year or more ago, but had not looked into them fearing to be tempted. This time we ventured. We came upon two poems —"To O, Of Her Dark Eyes," and "A Wind of Clear Weather in England." The book was ours —or rather, we were its, though we did not yield at once. We came back the next day and got it. We are still wondering how a book like that could stay in the shop so long. Once we had it, the day was different. The sky was sluiced with a clearer blue, air and sunlight blended for a keener intake of the lungs, faces seen along the street moved us with a livelier shock of interest and surprise. The wind that moved over Sussex and blew Mrs. Meynell's heart into her lines was still flowing across the ribs and ledges of our distant scene.

There is no mistaking a real book when one

meets it. It is like falling in love, and like that colossal adventure it is an experience of great social import. Even as the tranced swain, the booklover yearns to tell others of his bliss. He writes letters about it, adds it to the postscript of all manner of communications, intrudes it into telephone messages, and insists on his friends writing down the title of the find. Like the simple-hearted betrothed, once certain of his conquest, "I want you to love her, too!" It is a jealous passion also. He feels a little indignant if he finds that any one else has discovered the book, too. He sees an enthusiastic review—very likely in the *New Republic*—and says, with great scorn, "I read the book three months ago." There are even some perversions of passion by which a booklover loses much of his affection for his pet if he sees it too highly commended by some rival critic.

This sharp ecstasy of discovering books for one's self is not always widespread. There are many who, for one reason or another, prefer to have their books found out for them. But for the complete zealot nothing transcends the zest of pioneering for himself. And therefore working for a publisher is, to a certain type of mind, a never-failing fascination. As H. M. Tomlinson says in *Old Junk*, that fascinating collection of sensitive and beautifully poised sketches which came to us recently with a shock of thrilling delight:

To come upon a craft rigged so, though at her moorings, and with sails furled, her slender poles upspringing from the bright plane of a brimming harbour, is to me as rare and sensational a delight as the rediscovery, when idling with a book, of a favourite lyric.

To read just that passage, and the phrase *the bright plane of a brimming harbour*, is one of those "rare and sensational delights" that set the mind moving on lovely journeys of its own, and mark off visits to a bookshop not as casual errands of reason, but as necessary acts of devotion. We visit bookshops not so often to buy any one special book, but rather to rediscover, in the happier and more expressive words of others, our own encumbered soul.

THE RECLUSE OF FRANKLIN SQUARE

WHO can describe the endless fascination, allurement and magic of the city? It is like a great forest, full of enchantment for the eye and ear. What groves and aisles and vistas there are for wandering, what thickets and underbrush to explore! And how curious it is that most of us who frequent the city follow only little beaten paths of our own, rarely looking round the corner or investigating (in the literal sense) unfamiliar byways. We tread our own routine, from terminal or trolley to office, to the customary lunching place, back to the office, and home. Year after year we do this, until the city is for us nothing but a few tedious streets we know by heart.

But how dull it is to be confined to one life, one habit, one groove of conduct. Do you ever pine to shed the garment of well-worn behaviour, to wander off into the side-paths of the city, to lose yourself in its great teeming life? The thought is fascinating to me. I like to imagine myself

disappearing one day from my accustomed haunts, slipping away into some other quarter of the town, taking up entirely new habits and environment. Ah, that would be an adventure!

I think I would emigrate to Franklin Square which, after all, is only a few blocks north of the territory where I oscillate every day; but it seems almost like a different continent. I would go up to Franklin Square, take a room at one of those theatrical lodging houses on the western side of the square, grow a beard, wear a wide sombrero hat, and keep my pockets full of sweetmeats for the children of the square. In the course of a few months quite a legend would accumulate about me. I would be pointed out as one of the characters of the neighbourhood. Newspaper reporters would be sent to interview me. Then I would shave and move on to some other home.

Franklin Square is a jolly place on a warm day. There are red and pink geraniums round the pool in the middle. There is the drowsy whirr and hum of lawn mowers. There is a sweet, dull air moving gently across the wide grass plots; the flag waves heavily on the tall staff. There is a whole posse of baby carriages gathered together in a shady patch of pavement, with usually one small girl left to "mind" them while the other little guardians are sprinkling themselves with water at the standpipe, or playing hopscotch in the sun. You mind

my baby and I'll mind yours, is the tacit understanding of these ragged little damsels. But really it is surprising how little minding the Franklin Square babies seem to need. They lie in their carriages furling and unfurling their toes with a kind of spartan restraint. They refuse to bawl or to hurl themselves upon the paving below, because they know that their young nurses are having a good time.

Franklin Square policemen are stout and very jovial. An Italian woman was sitting on a bench opposite mine; she had a baby on her lap, one leaning against her knee, three sitting on the bench with her, and two in the carriage. Seven in all and I gathered from her remarks that six of them were boys. "Quite an army!" said the stout policeman, passing by. Her face gleamed with the quick pleasure of the Latin race. "Ah, yes," she said, "Italians good for boys!"

On the west side of the square are the theatrical boarding houses, where ladies with very short skirts and silk stockings air little fuzzy white dogs that just match the soiled marble steps. Midway in the row is a bulky chocolate-coloured church, Deutsche Evang. Lutherische, according to its signboard. Gottesdienst, Morgens 10:45, Abends 7:30. It is well for us to remember that God is worshiped in all languages. And up at the little news-stall at the corner of Vine Street, the

literary and dramatic leanings of Franklin Square seem to be reflected in the assortment of paper-backed volumes on display. *The Confessions of an Actress*, *The Stranglers of Paris*, and *Chicago by Night* are among the books there, also some exceedingly dingy editions of Boccaccio and Napoleon's Dream Book. I could learn a good deal, I am sure, by studying those volumes.

Franklin Square is full of colour. The green spaces are islanded in a frame of warm, red brick. The fountain bubbles whitely, the flag is an eager spot of brightness on the tall white mast. Shop windows seem to display a broader, more lilting kind of poster than they do on Market Street. There is one on a by-street representing a young man blowing heart-shaped smoke rings and a glorious young woman is piercing them with a knitting needle or some other sharp instrument.

I don't know just what I would do for a living on Franklin Square. The only thought that has occurred to me is this: someone must have to look after those little white dogs while their debonair mistresses are at the theatre. Why couldn't I do that, for a modest fee? I would take them all out at night and tow them through the fountain pool. It would serve to bleach them.

Another thing I could do, which I have always wanted to do, would be to decipher the last line of the tombstone that stands over the pathetic

grave of Benjamin Franklin's little son. That is not far from the square. The stone reads, as far as I can make it out, *Francis F., Son of Benjamin and Deborah Franklin, Deceased Nov. 21, 1736. Aged 4 years.* The number of months and days I can't make out, nor the last line of the epitaph which begins with the sadly expressive word *Delight.* It is much effaced, and without squatting on Ben Franklin's tomb I can't read it. And as there are usually some young ladies sitting knitting on the bench by the grave I am too bashful to do that. But if I lived in Franklin Square I would find a way somehow.

But much as I love it, I doubt if I could live in Franklin Square long. There is an air of unrest about it, of vagabond whimsy. The short skirted ladies would come and go, and sooner or later the bearded recluse, with his pocket full of candy, and his sombrero hat, would disappear and only the children would lament his going. For I know that if I were a wandering blade I could never resist a summons like this, which I found posted up just off the square. Here speak Romance and Adventure, with golden lute:

MEN WANTED TO TRAVEL
WITH R——'S CIRCUS
A CHANCE TO SEE THE COUNTRY
EXCELLENT BOARD AND COMFORTABLE
SLEEPING CARS PROVIDED BY THE MANAGEMENT

CATTERINA OF SPRING GARDEN STREET

SPRING GARDEN STREET is a pleasant thoroughfare for wandering on a cool summer morning about eight-thirty of the clock. It has been my diversion, lately, to get off the Reading train at the Spring Garden Station and walk to the office from there instead of pursuing the too familiar route from the Terminal. Try it some day, you victims of habit. To start the day by a little variation of routine is an excellent excitement for the mind.

That after-breakfast period, before the heat begins, has a freshness and easy vigour of its own. Housewives are out scrubbing the white marble steps; second-hand furniture dealers have spread their pieces on the pavement for better inspection and sit in their morris chairs by the curb to read the morning paper. Presumably the more ease and comfort they show the more plainly the desirability of a second-hand morris chair will be impressed on the passer-by; such is the psychology of their apparent indolence. A fire engine with

maroon chassis and bright silver boiler rumbles comfortably back to its station after putting out a fire somewhere. The barbers are out winding up the clock-work that keeps their red and white striped emblems revolving. And here and there on the pavement, reclining with rich relish where the sunlight falls in white patches, are gray and yellow cats.

The cats of Spring Garden Street are plump and of high cheer and they remind me of the most famous cat that ever lived in that neighbourhood. She was a big tortoise-shell puss called Catterina (Kate for short) and she lived in a little three-story brick cottage on Brandywine Street, which is just off Seventh Street behind the garage that now stands on the northwest corner of Seventh and Spring Garden. Catterina played a distinguished, even a noble, part in American literature. I am the gladder to celebrate her because I do not believe any one has ever paid her a tribute before. You see, she happened to be the particular pet and playmate of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Allan Poe.

It is curious that Philadelphia pays so little honour to that house on Brandywine Street, which is associated with the brief and poignant domestic happiness of that brilliant and tragic genius. Poe lived in Philadelphia from 1838 until 1844, and during the last two or three years of his stay he

occupied the little brick house on Brandywine Street. One of those who visited it then described it as "a small house, in one of the pleasant and silent neighbourhoods far from the centre of the town, and though slightly and cheaply furnished everything in it was so tasteful and so fitly disposed that it seemed altogether suitable for a man of genius." What is now only a rather dingy back yard was then a little garden full of roses, grapevine and creepers. Perhaps the pear tree that is still the most conspicuous feature of the yard was growing in Poe's tenancy. It was a double tree, with twin trunks, one of which was shattered by lightning quite recently.

Mrs. William Owens, who has lived in the house for eight years, was kind enough to take me through and showed me everything from attic to cellar. The house is built against a larger four-story dwelling which fronts on Seventh Street, now numbered as 530. In Poe's day the two houses were separate, the larger one being the property of a well-to-do Friend who was his landlord. Since then doors have been pierced and the whole is used as one dwelling, in which Mrs. Owens takes several boarders. It would interest Poe perhaps (as he was once in the army) to know that a service flag with three stars hangs from the front of the house. The stars represent John Pierce, Harry Bernhardt and Dominic Dimonico,

the first of these being, as I understand, a foster son of Mr. and Mrs. Owens.

It is not hard to imagine the charm of this snug little house as it may have been in the days when Poe (in his early thirties) and his sylphlike young wife and heroic mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm, faced the problem of living on the irregular earnings of editing and writing. Spring Garden was then near the northern outskirts of the city: the region was one of sober ruddy brick (of that rich hue dear to Philadelphia hearts) and well treed and gardened. Until very recent years an old lady was living, a neighbour of Mrs. Owens, who remembered how Virginia Poe used to sit at the window and play her harp.

The house is well and solidly built; the door opening toward Brandywine Street still has its original old-fashioned bolt lock, which Poe's hand must have fastened many and many a time. The little dining room has a fireplace, now filled in with a stove. In one of the rooms upstairs (according to local tradition) "The Raven" was written; and there are two bedrooms with casement windows in the attic. Some of Poe's finest work was done in this house, among other tales probably *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, *The Gold Bug* and *The Black Cat*. And here a curious coincidence may be noted. It will be remembered that in the story of *The Black Cat* Poe describes how some very un-

pleasant digging was done in a cellar. In cleaning the cellar of the Brandywine Street house Mrs. Owens discovered recently a place where the bricks in the flooring had been removed and a section of planking had been put in. Is it possible that the circumstance suggested to Poe the grisly theme of his story? Just for fun I would very much like to explore under those boards. They are old and have evidently been there a long time.

Imagination likes to conjure up the little household: the invalid Virginia Poe (it was in this house that she broke a blood vessel while singing), the stout-hearted and all-sacrificing mother-in-law—"Muddy," as the poet affectionately called her—the roses that grew over the wall, and (let us not forget her) Catterina, the cherished pet. Catterina was very much a member of the family. In April, 1844, when Poe and his wife moved to a boarding house in New York, where they found the table amazingly cheap and plentiful, he wrote to Mrs. Clemm:

> The house is old and looks buggy. The cheapest board I ever knew. I wish Kate could see it—she would faint. Last night, for supper, we had the nicest tea you ever drank, strong and hot—wheat bread and rye bread —cheese—tea cakes (elegant), a great dish (two dishes) of elegant ham and two of cold veal, piled up like a mountain—three dishes of the cakes and everything in the greatest profusion. No fear of starving here.

Poor Catterina (or Kate, as they sometimes called her)! Does not this suggestion of her swooning imply that she may have had to go on rather short commons in the little home on Brandywine Street? But after all, there must have been mice in the cellar, unless the ghost of the Black Cat frightened them away.

In the same letter, written from New York the day after the Poes had gone there to look for better fortune, he says:

> Sissy [his wife] had a hearty cry last night because you and Catterina weren't here.

But it was in the winter of 1846–47, when Mrs. Poe lay dying of consumption in the cottage at Fordham, that Catterina came to her highest glory. The description of that scene touches upon a human nerve of pity and compassion that must give the most callous a pang. Poe himself, harassed by poverty, pride and illness, had to witness the sufferings of his failing wife without ability to ease them. This is the description of a kind-hearted woman who saw them then:

> There was no clothing on the bed but a snow-white counterpane and sheets. The weather was cold and the sick lady had the dreadful chills that accompany the hectic fever of consumption. She lay on the straw bed, wrapped in her husband's great-coat, with a large tortoise-shell cat in her bosom. The wonderful cat seemed

conscious of her great usefulness. The coat and the cat were the sufferer's only means of warmth.

Perhaps Philadelphia will some day do fitting honour to the memory of that ill-starred household that knew its best happiness in the little house on Brandywine Street. Mr. Owens, who is a druggist, has whimsically set up in the front parlour one of the big scarlet papier-maché ravens that are used to advertise Red Raven Splits. But it seems to me that Philadelphia might go just a little further than that in honouring the house where "The Raven" may have been written.

A SLICE OF SUNLIGHT

ABOUT a quarter to nine in the morning, at this time of year, a slice of our pale primrose-coloured March sunlights cuts the bleak air across the junction of Broad and Chestnut streets and falls like a shining knife blade upon the low dome of the Girard Trust Building. Among those towering cliffs of masonry it is hard to see just where this shaving of brightness slips through, burning in the gray-lilac shadows of that stone valley. But there it is, and it always sets me thinking.

Man has travelled far in his strange pilgrimage and solaced himself with many lean and brittle husks. It is curious to think how many of his ingenious inventions are merely makeshifts to render tolerable the hardships and limitations he has imposed upon himself in the name of "civilization." How often his greatest cunning is expended in devising some pathetic substitute for the joy that once was his by birthright! He shuts himself up in beetling gibraltars of concrete, and thinks with pride of the wires, fans and pipes that bring

him light, air and warmth. And yet sunshine and sky and the glow of blazing faggots were once common to all. He talks to his friends by telephone, telegraph or machine-written letters instead of in the heart-easing face-to-face of more leisured times. He invents printing presses to do his thinking for him, reels of translucent celluloid to thrill him with vicarious romance. Not until the desire of killing other men came upon him did he perfect the loveliest of his toys—the airplane. How far, in his perverse flight from the natural sources of joy, has his love of trouble brought him!

So it is that one poor, thin, thwarted filament of sunlight, falling for a few precious minutes across a chasmed city street, seems so dazzling a boon and surprise that he passes enchanted on his darkened pavement. Man, how easily you are pleased!

Is there any one, in our alternate moods of bafflement and exultation, who has not brooded on this queer divergence of Life and Happiness? Sometimes we feel that we have been trapped: that Life, which once opened a vista so broad and golden, has somehow jostled and hurried us into a corner, into a narrow treadmill of meaningless gestures that exhaust our spirit and our mirth. In recent years all humanity has been herded in one vast cage of confusion and dread from which there seemed no egress. Now we are slowly, bitterly, perplexedly groping our way out of it. And per-

haps in the difficult years of rebuilding each man will make some effort to architect his existence anew, creeping humbly and hopefully a little closer to the fountains of beauty and strength that lie all about us. When did we learn to cut ourselves apart from earth's miracles of refreshment? To wall ourselves in from the sun's great laughter, to forget the flamboyant pageantry of the world? Earth has wisdom for all our follies, healing for all our wounds, dusk and music for all our peevishness. Who taught us that we could do without her? Can you hear the skylark through a telephone or catch that husky whisper of the pines in a dictograph? Can you keep your heart young in a row of pigeonholes? Will you forego the surf of ocean rollers to be serf to a rolltop desk?

Little by little, and in haphazard ways, wisdom comes to a man. No matter how resolutely he shuts his ears, Truth keeps pricking within him. What a futility, what a meanness and paltriness of living this is that would send us hence with all Life's great secrets unlearned, her ineffable beauties unguessed, her great folio only hastily glimpsed. Here is this spinning ball for us to marvel at, turning in an ever-changing bath of colour and shadow, blazed with sunshine, drenched with silver rain, leaning through green and orange veils of dusk, and we creep with blinkered eyes along narrow alleys of unseeing habit. What will it

profit us to keep a balance at the bank if we can't keep a balance of youth and sanity in our souls? Of what avail to ship carloads of goods north, east, south and west, if we cannot spare time to know our own dreams, to exchange our doubts and yearnings with our friends and neighbours?

In every man's heart there is a secret nerve that answers to the vibration of beauty. I can imagine no more fascinating privilege than to be allowed to ransack the desks of a thousand American business men, men supposed to be hard-headed, absorbed in brisk commerce. Somewhere in each desk one would find some hidden betrayal of that man's private worship. It might be some old newspaper clipping, perhaps a poem that had once touched him, for even the humblest poets are stout partisans of reality. It might be a photograph of children playing in the surf, or a little box of fish-hooks, or a soiled old timetable of some queer backwoods railroad or primitive steamer service that had once carried him into his land of heart's desire.

I remember a friend of mine, a man much perplexed by the cares of earth, but slow to give utterance to his inner and tenderer impulses, telling me how he first grasped the meaning and value of these inscrutable powers of virtue that hurl the whole universe daily around our heads in an unerring orbit. For some reason or other—he

was writing a book, I think, and sought a place of quiet—he had drifted for some winter weeks to the shore of a southern bay, down in Florida. When he came back he told me about it. It was several years ago, but I remember the odd look in his eyes as he tried to describe his experience. "I never knew until now," he said, "what sunshine and sky meant. I had always taken them for granted before." He told me of the strange sensation of lightness and quiet smiling that had flooded through him in that land where Nature writes her benignant lessons so plainly that all must draw their own conclusions. He told me of sunset flushes over long, purple waters, and of lying on sand beaches wrapped in sunshine, all the problems of human intercourse soothed away in a naked and unquestioning content. What he said was very little, but watching in his eyes I could guess what had happened. He had found more than sunshine and colour and an arc of violet sea. He had found a new philosophy, a new strength and realization of the worthiness of life. He had travelled far to find it: it might just as well be learned in Independence Square any sunny day when the golden light falls upon springing grass.

It is strange that men should have to be reminded of these things! How patiently, how persistently, with what dogged and misdirected pluck, they have taught themselves to ignore the

elemental blessings of mankind, subsisting instead on pale and wizened and ingenious substitutes. It is like a man who should shoulder for a place at a quick lunch counter when a broad and leisurely banquet table was spread free just around the corner. The days tick by, as busy, as fleeting, as full of empty gestures as a moving picture film. We crowd old age upon ourselves and run out to embrace it, for age is not measured by number of days but by the exhaustion of each day. Twenty days lived at slow pulse, in harmony with earth's loveliness, are longer than two hundred crowded with feverish appointments and disappointments. Many a man has lived fifty or sixty hectic years and never yet learned the unreckonable endlessness of one day's loitering, measured only by the gracious turning of earth and sun. Someone often asks me, "Why don't you wind the clocks?" But in those rare moments when I am sane clocks do not interest me.

Something of these thoughts flashes into my mind as I see that beam of pale and narrow sunlight fallen upon the roof of that bank building. How strange it is, when life is bursting with light and strength, renewing itself every day in colour and freshness, that we should sunder ourselves from these great sources of power. With all the treasures of earth at hand, we coop ourselves in narrow causeways where even a sudden knife-

edge of brightness is a matter for joyful surprise. As Stevenson once said, it is all very well to believe in immortality, but one must first believe in life. Why do we grudge ourselves the embraces of "Our brother and good friend the Sun"?

THE PAOLI LOCAL

IT IS always puzzling to the wayfarer, when he has travelled to some sacred spot, to find the local denizens going about their concerns as though unaware that they are on enchanted ground. It used to seem a hideous profanation to the Baedeker-stained tourist from Marsupial City, Ind., to step off the train at Stratford and find the butcher's cart jogging about with flanks and rumps. And even so does it seem odd to me that people are getting aboard the Paoli local every day, just as though it were the normal thing to do instead of (what it really is) an excursion into Arcadia.

Some day a poet will lutanize the Paoli local as it ought to be done, in a tender strain—

> Along that green embowered track
> My heart throws off its peddler's pack
> In memory commuting back
> Now swiftly and now slowly—
> Ah! lucky people, you, in sooth
> Who ride that caravan of youth
> The Local to Paoli!

The 2:15 train is a good one to take, for it affords an interesting opportunity to observe those who may be called sub-commuters: the people who come in town in the morning, like honest working folk, but get back to the country after lunch. These, of course, are only half-breed commuters. They are the silver-chevron suburbanites, deserving not the true golden stripes of those who moil all day. They are teachers, schoolboys, golfomaniacs and damsels from the home of Athene, Bryn Mawr. They are mere cherubim and seraphim, not archangels. Stern and grizzled veterans, who go home on the Hjw6:05 ("H" Will not run New Year's, Memorial, Independence, Thanksgiving and Christmas Days; "j" will not run Saturdays June 7 to Sept. 27, both inclusive; "w" No baggage service), speak of them scornfully as "Sam Brown belt commuters."

One who was nourished along the line of the Paoli local, who knew it long before it became electrified with those spider-leg trolleys on its roof and before the Wynnewood embankments were lined with neat little garages, sometimes has an inner pang that it is getting a bit too civilized. And yet no train will ever mean to us what that does! The saying that was good enough for Queen Mary and Mr. Browning is good enough for me. When I die, you will find the words PAOLI LOCAL indelibled on my heart. When the Corsican pa-

triot's bicentennial comes along, in 1925, I hope there will be a grand reunion of all the old travellers along that line. The railroad will run specially decorated trains and distribute souvenirs among commuters of more than forty years' standing. The campus of Haverford College will be the scene of a mass-meeting. There will be reminiscent addresses by those who recall when the tracks ran along Railroad Avenue at Haverford and up through Preston. An express agent will be barbecued, and there will be dancing and song and passing of the mead cup until far into the night.

The first surprise the Paoli local gives one never fails to cause a mild wonder. Just after leaving West Philadelphia Station, you see William Penn looming up away on the right. As you are convinced that you left him straight behind, and have not noticed any curve, the sensation is odd. At Fifty-second Street rise the shallow green slopes of George's Hill, with its Total Abstinence fountain. Nearer the track are wide spaces of vacant ground where some small boys of the sort so delightfully limned by Fontaine Fox have scooped military dugouts, roofed over with cast-off sheets of corrugated iron, very lifelike to see.

At Overbrook one gets one's first glimpse of those highly civilized suburbs. It is a gloriously sunny May afternoon. Three girls are sitting under a hedge at the top of the embankment read-

ing a magazine. The little iron fences, so characteristic of the Main Line, make their appearance. A lady tubed in a tight skirt totters valiantly down the road toward the station, and the courteous train waits for her. If the director general of railroads were a bachelor perhaps he would insert a new footnote in his time-tables: "Sk," will not wait for ladies in hobble skirts. The signal gives its blithe little double chirp and we are off again.

Toward Merion we skirt a brightly sliding little brook under willow trees, with glimpses of daintily supervised wilderness. It is all so trimly artificed that one is surprised to see that the rubbery stalks of the dandelion have evaded the lawn-mower just as they do in less carefully razored suburbs. Honeysuckles sprawl along the embankments, privet hedges bound neat gardens. There is a new station at Merion. In old bucolic days the Main Line station masters lived and kept house in the depots, and if one had to wait for a train one could make friends with the station master's little girl and pet cat. But all those little girls are grown up now and are Bryn Mawr alumnæ.

At Narberth one sees clustered roofs embowered in trees, in the hollow below the railway, and a snatch of ploughed land. Now one is really in the country. Narberth, Wynnewood, Ardmore, Haverford—so it runs, like a chapter of begats. At

Wynnewood, if you are sitting on the right, you see an alluring vista of a long alley through sun-speckled greenery. The baggage agent has nailed an old chair seat to a little wooden box which provides a meditating throne for such small leisure as a Main Line baggage agent gets. Ardmore—strange to think that it used to call itself Athensville—doesn't quite know whether it is a suburb or a city. Clumps of iris look upon busy freight yards; back gardens with fluttering Monday linen face upon a factory and a gas tank. And then, in a flash, one is at Haverford, the goal of pilgrimage.

Haverford is changed as little as any of the suburbs since the days when one knew it by heart. Yet Mr. Harbaugh has moved his pharmacy to a new building and it can never be quite the same! The old stuffed owl sits bravely in the new window, but the familiar drug-scented haunt where we drank our first soda and bought our first tobacco is empty and forlorn. But the deep buttercup meadow by the Lancaster pike is still broad and green, with the same fawn-coloured velvety cow grazing.

And there is one thing that they can never change: the smell of the Haverford lawns in May, when the grass is being mowed. A dazzling pervasion of sunlight loiters over those gentle slopes, draws up the breath of the grass, blue space is rich with its balmy savour. Under the arches of

the old maples are the white figures of the cricketers. In the memorial garden behind the library the blue phlox is out in pale masses. The archway of the beech hedge looks down on the huge prostrate mock-orange tree. Under the hemlocks (I hope they're hemlocks) by the observatory is that curious soft, dry, bleached grass which is so perfect to lie on with a book and not read it. And here comes Harry Carter careering over the lawns with his gasoline mowing machine. Everything is the same at heart. And that is why it's the perfect pilgrimage, the loveliest spot on earth, then, now and forever!

THE WHITMAN CENTENNIAL

YESTERDAY—Memorial Day—was a true Walt Whitman day. The ferries thronged with cheerful people, the laughing, eager throng at the Camden terminal, piling aboard trolley cars for a holiday outing—the clang and thud of marching bands, the flags and flowers and genial human bustle, pervaded now and then by that note of tribute to the final mystery—surely all this was just such a scene as Walt loved to watch and ponder. And going on pilgrimage with two English editors to Mickle Street and Harleigh Cemetery, it was not strange that our thoughts were largely with the man whose hundredth birthday we bear in mind to-day.

By just so far (it seems to me) as we find it painful to read Walt Whitman, by just so far we may reckon our divergence from the right path of human happiness. If it perturbs us to read his jottings of "specimen days" along Timber creek, wrestling with his twelve-foot oak sapling to gain strength, sluicing in clear water and scouring his naked limbs with his favourite flesh-brush, rumi-

nating in blest solitude among the tints of sunset, the odour of mint-leaves and the moving airs of the summer meadow—if this gives us a twinge, then it is probably because we have divorced ourselves from the primitive joyfulness of the open air. If we find his trumpetings of physical candour shameful or unsavoury, perhaps it is because we have not schooled our thoughts to honest cleanliness. (Though Anne Gilchrist's gentle comment must not be forgotten: "Perhaps Walt Whitman has forgotten the truth that our instincts are beautiful facts of nature, as well as our bodies; and that we have a strong instinct of silence about some things.") If we find him lacking in humour or think some of his catalogues tedious—there are catalogues and shortage of humour even in some books considered sacred. And Whitman, if not a humorist himself, has been (as Mr. Chesterton would say) the cause of humour in others. How adorably he has lent himself to parody! But this by the way. The point is, Whitman is a true teacher: first the thrashing, then the tenderness. No one ever found him exhilarating on the first reading. But he is a hound of heaven. He will hunt you down and find you out. Expurgate him for yourself, if you wish. He cannot be inclosed in a formula. He asks you to draw up your own formula as you read him. Rest assured, William Blake would not have found him obscure. "If you want

me again, look for me under your bootsoles." Is not that the very accent of Blake?

There is marvellous drama in Camden for the seeing eye. The first scene is Mickle Street, that dingy, smoke-swept lane of mean houses. The visitors from oversea stood almost aghast when they saw the pathetic vista. For years they had dwelt on Whitman's magnificent messages of pride and confidence:

> See, projected through time,
> For me an audience interminable.

Perhaps they had conjured to mind a clean little cottage such as an English suburb might offer: a dainty patch of wallflowers under the front door, a shining brass knocker, a sideboard of mahogany with an etching of Walt on the wall. No wonder, then, that the deathplace of the poet with "audience interminable" came as a shock.

And yet, one wonders, is not that faded box, with its flag hanging from the second story and little Louis Skymer's boyish sign in the window—*Rabbits for sale cheap*—and the backyard littered with hutches and the old nose-broken carved bust of Walt chucked away in a corner—is it not in a way strangely appropriate? Would not Walt almost have preferred it to be so, with its humble homeliness, so instinct with humanity, rather than a neatly tidied mausoleum? If Walt had believed

that a man must live in a colonial cot in a fashionable suburb in order to write great poetry he would not have been Walt.

The great matter is to reveal and outpour the God-like suggestions pressing for birth in the soul.

And then it must be remembered that Walt didn't much live on Mickle Street until he became a confirmed invalid, and his pack of listeners kept him talking so hard he didn't know where he was. He lived on the ferries, up and down Chestnut Street, or (for that matter) in the constellation Orion.

The second scene of the Camden drama is at Harleigh Cemetery. Here, among that sweet city of the dead, in a little dell where the rhododendrons yield their fragrance to the sun-heavy air, the massive stone door stands ajar. A great pile of flowers, laid there by the English-Speaking Union, was heaped at the sill. More instinctively than in many a church, the passer lifts his hat.

Has any one supposed it lucky to be born?
I hasten to inform him or her it is just as lucky to die, and I know it.

I thought of what a little girl who was standing on the pavement of Mickle Street had said to me as we halted in front of the Whitman house. "My father was sick, and he died."

Yesterday—Memorial Day—was a day of poignant thoughts. Walt wrote once in *Specimen Days:*

> Somehow I got thinking to-day of young men's deaths—not at all sadly or sentimentally, but gravely, realistically, *perhaps a little artistically.*

What a curious note of apology there is in the last admission! He who was so rarely "artistic"! He who began his career as a writer of incredibly mawkish short stories and doggerels, and rigidly trained himself to omit the "stock" touches! Let us not try to speak of Walt, or of death, in any "artistic" vein.

"Stop this day and night with me" (Walt said) "and you shall possess the origin of all poems." By which he meant, of course, you shall possess your own soul. You shall grasp with sureness and ecstasy the only fact you can cling to in this baffling merry-go-round—the dignity and worth of your own life. In reading Whitman one seems to burst through the crust of perversity, artificial complexity and needless timidity that afflicts us all, to meet a strong river of sanity and courage that sweeps away the petty rubbish. Because it is so far from the course of our meaningless gestures, we know instinctively it is right and true. There is no heart so bruised, there is no life so needlessly perplexed, but it can find its message in this man. "I have the best of time and space,"

he said. So have we all, for our little moment. Read his defiant words, great and scornful as any ever penned:

What place is besieged, and vainly tries to raise the siege?
Lo, I send to that place a commander, swift, brave, immortal,
And with him horse and foot, and parks of artillery.
And artillerymen, the deadliest that ever fired gun.

He sends you your own soul.

As we rode back to Camden on the trolley one of my companions spied the Washington statue in front of the courthouse (which I had been hoping he would miss). He smiled at the General grotesquely kneeling in stone. "Only giving one knee to his Maker," was his droll comment.

It was so with Walt. He wanted to be quite sure what he was kneeling to before he gave both knees.

Perhaps the most curious (and gruesome) story in connection with Whitman comes to me from James Shields. He has showed me a monograph by the late Dr. E. A. Spitzka, professor of anatomy at the Jefferson Medical College, which gives a brief review of scientific post-mortem measurements made of the brains of 130 notable men and four women. In this monograph, reprinted by

the American Philosophical Society in 1907, occurs the following paragraph:

87. WHITMAN, WALT, American poet. The weight of Walt Whitman's brain is variously given as 45.2 ounces (1282 grams) and 43.3 ounces (1228 grams). His stature was six feet and in health he weighed about 200 pounds. The brain had been preserved, but some careless attendant in the laboratory let the jar fall to the ground; it is not stated whether the brain was totally destroyed by the fall, but it is a great pity that not even the fragments of the brain were rescued.

ALONG THE GREEN NESHAMINY

THERE are scenes so rich in colour, so flooded with sunlight, that the hand hardly knows how to set them down. They seem to yearn for expression in what is called poetry, yet one fears to submit them to the bending and twisting of rhyme. For when one embarks on the ecstatic search for words in tune with one another he may find bright and jovial cadences, but rarely does he say just what was in his heart. How, then, may one order the mysterious mechanism that gears brain with forefinger so that the least possible colour and contour be lost in transmission?

The other day I rowed up Neshaminy Creek. It is a bright little river seventeen miles or so from Philadelphia, a stripling of the great-hearted Delaware. Its wooded and meaded banks are a favoured pleasuring ground for pavement-keeping souls, who set up a tent there in the summertime and cruise those innocent waters in canoes. It is a happy stream, beloved of picnic parties. Millions of hard-boiled eggs and ice cream cones have per-

ished in the grove above the dam, and a long avenue of stately poplar trees has grown up to commemorate them. The picnicking point is known as Neshaminy Falls, though the falling is done mostly by high-spirited flappers on the entertaining toboggan chute, down which they launch themselves in a cheering line. The river falls tamely enough over a small dam; Niagara's prestige is nowhere menaced.

There is a kind of emergency fleet corporation doing a bustling traffic at the little plank landing stage. The chief navigating officer was toting a roll of bills larger than I can face with comfort. From him one hires a vessel of sorts, propelled by bright red oars, and then one sets forth up the stream. Most of the voyagers are content after passing the island, for the current, though sluggish, is persistent. But it is well to keep on. Neshaminy shows her rarest charms to those who woo her stoutly.

Above the island there is a long strip of thick woodland on both banks. The treetops, rising steeply into the bright air, keep tossing and trembling in the wind, but the stream itself is entirely still. Along the bank, where the great bleached trunks climb out of the water, there hangs the peculiar moist, earthy, pungent smell of a river that runs among woods. Every freshwater bather must know that smell. It has in it

a dim taint as of decay, a sense of rotting vegetation. Yet it is a clean odour and a cool one. It is a smell particularly dear to me, for it recalls to my eager nostril the exact scent of the old bathing place on the Cherwell at Oxford, quaintly known as Parsons' Pleasure. How vividly I remember that moist, cool corner of turf, the afternoon sunlight stabbing it with slanting arrows of gold, the enigmatic old Walt Whitman (called Cox) handing out damp towels from his dingy hutch, and the clean white bodies poised against green willows. Would it hurt Neshaminy's feelings if I were to confess that the poignance of its appeal to me was partly due to its kinship with the Oxford Cher?

A little farther up, the creek has the good sense to throw off its mantle of woods. Wide meadows come to the water's edge; hills of a friendly sort are folded down about it, showing a bare line of upland against the sky. A clean line of hill against the emptiness of blue is a sight that never tires. A country road crosses the stream on a flimsy bridge that leans on stout old stone piers. The road bends away uphill, among a wilderness of blackberry bushes, winding among pastures where the cows are grazing. That is a good kind of road; the sort of road one associates with bare feet and hot dust sifting between boyish toes.

Above this bridge the creek shallows. Through the clear water one sees the bottom humped with

brown stones. Many of the larger boulders bear a little white paint stain on their upward ridges, showing where a venturesome excursionist has bumped one of the transports of the emergency fleet corporation. Dragonflies gleam like winged scarfpins. Under the boat flashes the bright shape of a small perch or sunfish. On the willow trunks that lean along the bank an occasional fisherman is watching his float. The current moves faster here, dimpling and twisting in little swirls. The water shines and glows: it seems to have caught whole acres of living sunlight. Far above a great hawk is lazily slanting and sliding, watching curiously to see the mail plane from Bustleton that passes up the valley every afternoon.

There is no peace like that of a little river, and here it is at its best.

At last we reached the point where, if the boat is to go further, it must be propelled by hand, the pilot walking barefoot in the stream. Easing her round sharp reefs, pushing through swift little passages where the current spurts deeply between larger stones, she may be pushed up to a huge tree trunk lying along the shore, surrounded by the deliciously soft and fluid mud loved by country urchins, the mud that *schloops* when one withdraws the sunken foot. Here, the world reduced to "a green thought in a green shade," one may watch the waterbirds tiptoeing and teetering over

the shallows, catch the tune of the little rapids scuffling round the bend and eat whatever sandwiches are vouchsafed by the Lady of the White Hand. High above treetops and framing the view stands the enormous viaduct of the Trenton cutoff. A heavy freight train thundering over it now and then keeps one in touch with the straining world.

In the swift sparkle that bickers round the bend one may get a dip and a sprawl in the fashion that is in favour with those who love the scour of lightly running water over the naked flesh. That corner of the stream is remote and screened. There is a little gap between two shouldery stones where the creek pours itself chuckling and vehement. The bottom is grown with soft, spongy grasses that are very pleasant to squat upon. I presume that every man in the world takes any opportunity he can to wallow in a running brook. It is an old tradition, and there cannot be too much of it.

The little rivers are excellent friends of man. They are brisk, cheerful and full of quiet corners of sun. They are clear and clean, the terror of dark unknown waters is not in them. I have known and loved many such, and I hope to make friends with more. When I look back and reckon up the matters that are cause for regret there will not stand among them my private and pagan sluice in the bright water of Neshaminy.

MADONNAS OF THE CURB

A LITTLE girl—she can't have been more than twelve years old—stood up gravely and said: "The meeting will please come to order. The secretary will read the minutes of the last meeting."

The gathering of small females—some ragged, some very trim, ranging in age from eight to fourteen—sat expectant. A child in a clean pink dress with neatly braided blonde hair advanced seriously and read the minutes of the previous meeting.

"Are there any corrections?" said the president.

There were none and the meeting proceeded to business. On a long table in the schoolroom was a large laundry basket, a small quilted mattress, sheets, blankets and other accessories. There was a baby there, a life-size doll, amazingly realistic. The business of the meeting was the discussion, under the guidance of Miss Matilda Needle, the teacher, of the proper way of making a baby's bed, putting him to sleep in the basket and ventilating

the room. It was the Little Mothers' League of the Vare School, on Morris Street, holding its weekly meeting.

Miss Needle took the chair. "I saw something the other day," she said to the children, "that pleased me very much. I was coming down the street and I saw Elsie Pulaski holding a baby like this." (She illustrated by picking up the doll, letting its head sag, and all the Little Mothers looked very grave.) "I was about to speak to her when Bertha Fitz ran across the street and said to her: 'You mustn't hold the baby like that. You'll hurt him.' And Bertha showed her the right way to hold him. Now can any of you show me the way Bertha did it?"

Thirty small arms waved frantically in the air. There was a furious eagerness to show how the luckless Elsie should have held her baby brother.

"Well, Mary," said the teacher, "you show us how the baby should be picked up."

Blushing with pride, Mary advanced to the table and with infinite care inserted one arm under the large doll. But in her excitement she made a false start. She used the right arm where the position of the artificial infant demanded the left. This meant that her other arm had to pass diagonally across the baby in an awkward way. Immediately several of the juvenile audience showed signs of professional disgust. Hands vi-

brated in air. Another member of the Little Mothers' League was called upon, and poor Mary took her seat in discomfiture.

They passed to another topic. One of the members demonstrated the correct way of making the baby's bed. With proud certainty she disposed the mattress, the rubber sheeting, the sheets and blankets, showing how each should be tucked in, how the upper sheet should be turned down over the top of the blanket, so that the wool would not irritate the baby's chin. The others watched her with the severity of judges on the bench.

The teacher began to ask questions.

"Who should the baby sleep with?" she said.

One very small girl, carried away by the form of the question, cried out, "His mother!" The others waved their hands.

"Well, who *should* he sleep with?" said Miss Needle.

"Himself!" cried several triumphantly.

"Why should he sleep by himself? Rosa, you tell us."

Rosa stood up. She was a dark-eyed little creature, with hair cropped short—we will not ask why. Her face worked with the excitement of putting her thoughts into language.

"If he sleeps with his mother she might lay on him and smother him."

They all seemed to shudder. It was as though

the unfortunate infant was perishing before their very eyes.

The Little Mothers' Leagues are groups of small girls, ranging in age from eight to fourteen, who are being taught the essentials of caring for babies, under the direction of the Child Federation. By the kindness of the Federation and Miss O'Neill, the supervisor of public school playgrounds, I was privileged to visit four of these classes the other afternoon. In three of the schools the children were learning how to put the baby to bed; in one they were sitting around a small bathtub studying the technique of the baby's bath. Some of the girls had brought babies with them, for almost all of them are at least partly responsible for the care of one or more children. There was a moving pathos in the gravity with which these matrons before their time discussed the problems of their craft; and yet it was also the finest kind of a game and they evidently enjoyed it heartily. Many of them come from ignorant homes where the parents know next to nothing of hygiene. Their teachers tell of the valiant efforts of these children to convert their mothers to more sanitary ways—efforts which are happily often successful. In one home, where the father was a tailor, the baby was kept in a room where the pressing was done, the air was hot and heavy with steam. The small daugh-

ter, who was a member of the Little Mothers' League, insisted on the baby being removed to another room. Two children in another school, who had been told of the importance of keeping the baby's milk on ice, tried to make home-made ice-boxes, which their fathers, becoming interested, promised to finish for them.

One wishes that all this might be only an enchanting game for these children, and that it would not be necessary for them to put it into practice every day, with tired little arms and aching backs. He must be stiff-hearted indeed who can watch these gatherings, their tousled little heads and bare legs, their passionate intentness, their professional enthusiasm, without something of a pang. They know so much of the problems, and they are so pathetically small. There is a touching truth in the comment of one teacher in her report: "The girls who had no babies at home seemed to take greater interest than those that did have." But this is not always so, for nothing could be more enthusiastic than the little essays written by the children themselves, describing what they have learnt. I cannot resist a few quotations:

No one can be healthy unless she is extremely clean. Baby will want his bath daily, with soap and warmish water. You should not put to much soap on the baby's face as it get in the baby's eyes. They likes to kick the

water as long as support his head. Before starting on this swimming expedition, you should have all, her or him clothes, warm, by you, and he expects a warm flannel on your knees to lie on. You must carefully dry all the creases in his fat body for him, with a soft towel. (Ruth Higgins, Fifth Grade.)

The Little Mothers' League has helped me a good bit in dressing my little baby sister and I have enjoyed it very much and I think it is a very sencible society. I have learnt how to dress the baby in winter and summer. And after it is done with the bottle it should be boiled. (Helen Potter.)

A baby is not to be made to walk to soon because he might become bollegged. Some mothers think it is nice to see the baby walk soon. You should never listen to what your neighbor says when your baby is sick but take him to a doctor (Anna Mack, Sixth Grade).

In washing a baby you should have a little tub to bath it in and when you hear the doorbell ring you should never let your baby in the tub while you go because many of them get drowned, and you should use castial soap because that is the best. (Marie Donahue, Seventh Grade, age 12.)

But perhaps most eloquent of all is what little Mary Roberts says. Mary is in the Sixth Grade at the Boker School:

"The melancholy days are come
The saddest of the year,"

Is what we all think when the time comes when The Little Mothers' League has to break up for the year. For seven weeks we have listened eagerly to what Miss Ford has told us. We all hope Miss Ford will come back to Boker School next fall and teach us how to care for infants.

BROAD STREET STATION

BROAD STREET STATION is to me a place of extraordinary fascination. Among the cloudy memories of early childhood it stands solidly, a home of thunders and shouting, of gigantic engines with their fiery droppings of coal and sudden jets of steam. It was a place in which a delighted sense of adventure was closely mixed with fear. I remember being towed along, as a very small urchin, among throngs of hasty feet and past the prodigious glamour of those huge wheels and pistons. (Juvenile eyes are very close to the ground.) Then, arrived within, the ramping horses carved opposite the head of the stairs and the great map on the northern wall were a glorious excitement to my wondering gaze. Nowadays, when I ramble about the station its enchantment is enhanced by the recollection of those early adventures. And as most people, when passing through a station, are severely intent upon their own problems and little conscious of scrutiny, it is the best of places to study the great human show. Mr. Joseph Pennell, in a thrilling drawing,

has given a perfect record of Broad Street's lights and tones that linger in the eye—the hurdling network of girders, the pattering files of passengers, the upward eddies of smoke.

A sense of baffling excitement and motion keeps the mind alert as one wanders about the station. In the dim, dusky twilight of the train-shed this is all the more impressive. A gray-silver haze hangs in the great arches. Against the brightness of the western opening the locomotives come gliding in with a restful relaxation of effort, black indistinguishable profiles. The locomotives are the only restful things in the scene—they and the red-capped porters, who have the priestly dignity of oracles who have laid aside all earthly passions. Most of the human elements wear the gestures of eagerness, struggle and perplexity. The Main Line commuters, it is true, seem to stroll trainward like a breed apart, with an air of leisurely conquest and assurance. They have the bearing of veterans who have conquered the devils of transportation and hold them in leash. But this superb carelessness is only factitious. Some day their time will come and they will fall like the rest of us. They will career frantically to and fro, dash to information desk and train bulletin, rummage for tickets and wipe a beaded brow. What gesture, incidentally, is so significantly human as that of mopping the forehead?

If I were a sculptor at work on a symbolic statue of Man I would carve him with troubled and vacant eyes, dehydrating his brow with a handkerchief.

Take your stand by the train gate a few moments before the departure of the New York express. What a medley of types, and what a common touch of anxiety and wistfulness makes them kin! Two ladies are bidding each other a prolonged farewell. "Now, remember, 7 Howland Street, Cambridge," says the departer. "Be sure to write!" A feverish man rushes back from the train, having forgotten something, and fights his way against the line which is filing through the gate. Another man hunts dismally through all his pockets for his ticket, rocking gently and thoughtfully on his heels. The ticket seems to have vanished. He pushes his hat back on his forehead and says something to the collector. This new posture of his hat seems to aid him, for in another half minute the ticket appears in a pocket that he has already gone through several times. The official cons his watch every five seconds. A clerk, apparently from one of the ticket windows, rushes up with a long strip ticket. There is some question about a sailor with a furlough ticket to Providence. Has he gone through? Haven't seen him. The gateman claps the gate to and switches off the light. Three other man come dashing up and are

let through by the kindness of the usher. Then comes the sailor galloping along with a heavy suitcase. "Here he is! Here's your ticket!" Again the gate is opened and the navy man tears down the platform. The train is already moving, but he just makes it. Far out, in the bright sunlight beyond the station, the engine can be seen pulling out, ejecting a stiff spire of smoke and horizontal billows of steam.

At the same time rumbles in the hourly express from New York. Watch the people come out. Here is the brisk little man with a brown bag, who always leads the crowd. The men from the smoker are first, puffing pipes or cigars. They all seem to know exactly where they want to go and push on relentlessly. After the main body of travellers come the Pullman passengers, usually followed by porters. Here is a girl in a very neat blue suit. Her porter carries an enormous black hat-box painted with very swagger stripes of green. She is pretty, in a rather frank way, but too dusty with powder. An actress, one supposes. A tall young man steps out from the crowd, something very rakish about him, too. She looks surprised. "Nice of me to meet you, wasn't it?" he says. They walk off together, and one notices the really admirable hang of her blue skirt, just reaching her fawn spats. Sorry she uses so much powder. Curious thing; the same young chap was back

again an hour later, this time to meet a man on the next New York train. They both wore brightly burnished brown shoes and seemed to have completely mastered life's perplexities. All these little dramas were enacted to a merry undertone of constant sound: the clear chime of bells, the murmur and throb of hissing steam, the rumble of baggage trucks, the slither of thousands of feet.

There is not much kissing done when people arrive from New York, but if you will linger about the gate when the Limited gets in from Chicago you will see that humanity pays more affectionate tribute to friends arriving from that distant country. There was one odd little group of three. A man and a woman greeted another lady who arrived on the Chicago train. The two women kissed with a luxurious smacking. Then the man and the arrival kissed. The Chicago lady wore an enormous tilted hat with plumes. "Well, I'm here," she said, but without any great enthusiasm. The man was obviously frightfully glad to see her. But stand how he would, she kept the slant of her hat between her face and him. He tried valiantly to get a straight look at her. She would not meet his gaze. He put his head on one side astonishingly like a rooster, and his whole attitude expressed an earnest desire to please. When he spoke to her she answered to the other woman. She handed him her baggage checks with-

out looking at him. Then she pointed to a very heavy package at her feet. With a weary resignation he toted it, and they moved away.

Inside the station the world is divided sharply into two halves. On the trainward side all is bustle and stir; the bright colours of news-stands and flower stalls, brisk consultation of timetables at the information desk, little telephone booths, where lights wink on and off. In one of these booths, with the door open for greater coolness, a buyer is reporting to his home office the results of an out-of-town trip. "How much did you sold of that?" he says. "He offered me a lot—pretty nice leather—he wanted seventy-five—well, listen, finally I offered him sixty-five—Oh, no, no, no, no, he claims it's a dollar grade—well, I don't know, it might be ninety cent maybe."

But abaft the big stairway a quiet solemnity reigns. The long benches of the waiting room seem a kind of Friends' meeting. Momently one expects to see someone rise and begin to speak. But it is not the peace of resignation; it is the peace of exhaustion. These are the wounded who have dragged themselves painfully from the onset, stricken on the great battlefield of Travel. Here one may note the passive patience of humanity, and also how pathetically it hoards its little possessions. A lady rises to get a drink of water. With what zealous care she stacks all her impedi-

ments in a neat pile—umbrella, satchel, handbag, shawl, suitcase, tippet, raincoat and baby—and confides them to her companion. A gust of that characteristic railroad restaurant odour drifts outward from the dining room—a warm, soupy blend of browned chicken-skin and crisp roll-crust. On one end of the bench are three tall bronzed doughboys, each with two service stripes and the red chevron. They have bright blue eyes and are carefully comparing their strip tickets, which seem nearly a yard long. A lady in very tight black suède slippers stilts out of the dining room. Like everyone else in the waiting room she walks as though her feet hurt her. The savour of food is blown outward by electric fans. The doughboys are conferring together. They have noticed two lieutenants dining at one of the white-draped tables. This seems to enrage them. Finally they can stand it no longer. Their vast rawhide marching boots go clumping into the dining room. Every now and then the announcer comes to the head of the stairway and calls out something about a train to Harrisburg, Altoona, Pittsburgh and Chicago. There is a note of sadness in his long-drawn wail, as though it would break his heart if no one should take this train, which is a favourite of his. A few weary casuals hoist themselves from the benches, gather their belongings anew and stagger away.

THE SHORE IN SEPTEMBER

THE sands are lonely in the fall. On those broad New Jersey beaches, where the rollers sprawl inward in ridges of crumbling snow, the ocean looks almost wistfully for its former playmates. The children are gone, the small brown legs, the toy shovels and the red tin pails. The familiar figures of the summer season have vanished: the stout ladies who sat in awninged chairs and wrestled desperately to unfurl their newspapers in the wind; the handsome mahogany-tanned lifesavers, the vamperinoes incessantly drying their tawny hair, the corpulent males of dark complexion wearing ladies' bathing caps, the young men playing a degenerate baseball with a rubber sphere and a bit of shingle. All that life and excitement, fed upon hot dogs and vanilla cones, anointed with cold cream and citronella, has vanished for another year.

But how pleasant it is to see the town (it is Fierceforest we have in mind) taking its own vacation, after labouring to amuse its visitors all summer long. Here and there in the surf you will see

a familiar figure. That plump lady, lathered by sluicing combers as she welters and wambles upon Neptune's bosom, is good Frau Weintraub of the delicatessen, who has been frying fish and chowdering clams over a hot stove most of July and August, and now takes her earned repose. Yonder is the imposing bulge of the real estate agent, who has been too busy selling lots and dreaming hotel sites to visit the surf hitherto. Farther up the shore is the garage man, doing a little quiet fishing from the taffrail of a deserted pier. The engineer of the "roller coaster" smokes a cigar along the deserted boardwalk and discusses the League of Nations with the gondolier-in-chief of the canals of Ye Olde Mill. The hot-dog expert, whose merry shout, "Here they are, all red hot and fried in butter!" was wont to echo along the crowded arcade, has boarded up his stand and departed none knows where.

There is a tincture of grief in the survey of all this liveliness coffined and nailed down. Even the gambols of Fierceforest's citizens, taking their ease at last in the warm September surf, cannot wholly dispel the mournfulness of the observer. There is something dreadfully glum in the merry-go-round seen through its locked glass doors. All those gayly caparisoned horses, with their bright Arabian housings, their flowing manes and tossing heads and scarlet-painted nostrils, stand stilled

in the very gesture of glorious rotation. One remembers what a jolly sight that carrousel was on a warm evening, the groaning pipes of the steam-organ chanting an adorable ditty (we don't know what it is, but it's the tune they always play at the movies when our favourite Dorothy Gish comes on the screen), children laughing and holding tight to the wooden manes of the horses, and flappers with their pink dresses swirling, clutching for the brass ring that means a free ride. All this is frozen into silence and sleep, like a scene in a fairy tale. It is very sad, and we dare not contemplate the poor little silent horses too long.

Bitterly does one lament the closing of the Boardwalk auction rooms, which were a perpetual free show to those who could not find a seat in the movies. There was one auctioneer who looked so like Mr. Wilson that when we saw his earnest gestures we always expected that the League of Nations would be the subject of his harangue. But on entering and taking a seat (endeavouring to avoid his eye when he became too persuasive, for fear some involuntary gesture or the contortions of an approaching sneeze would be construed as a bid for a Chinese umbrella stand) we always found that it was a little black box full of teacups that was under discussion. He would hold one up against an electric bulb to show its transparency. When he found his audience unresponsive he

would always say, "You know I don't have to do this for a living. If you people don't appreciate goods that have quality, I'm going to pack up and go to Ocean City." But he never went. Almost every evening, chagrined by someone's failure to bid properly for a cut-glass lady-finger container or a porcelain toothbrush-rack, he would ask the attendant to set it aside. "I'll buy it myself," he would cry, and as he kept on buying these curious tidbits for himself throughout the summer, we used to wonder what his wife would say when they all arrived.

Along the quiet Boardwalk we saunter, as the crisp breeze comes off the wide ocean spaces. Bang! bang! bang! sound the hammers, as the shutters go up on the beauty parlour, the toy shop, the shop where sweet-grass baskets were woven, and the stall where the little smiling doll known as Helene, the Endearing Beach Vamp, was to be won by knocking down two tenpins with a swinging pendulum. How easy it was to cozen the public with that! A bright red star was painted at the back of the pendulum's swing, and the natural assumption of the simple competitor was that by aiming at that star he would win the smiling Helene. Of course, as long as one aimed at the star success was impossible. The Japanese dealers, with the pertinacity of their race, are almost the last to linger. Their innocent little gaming boards,

their fishponds where one angles for counterfeit fish and draws an eggcup or a china cat, according to the number inscribed on the catch, their roulette wheels ("Ten Cents a Chance--No Blanks")—all are still in operation, but one of the shrewd orientals is packing up some china at the back of the shop. He knows that trade is pretty well done for this season. We wondered whether he would go down to the beach for a swim before he left. He has stuck so close to business all summer that perhaps he does not know the ocean is there. There is another thrifty merchant, too, whose strategy comes to our attention. This is the rolling-chair baron, who has closed his little kiosque, but has taken care to paint out the prices per hour of his vehicles, and has not marked any new rates. Cautious man, he is waiting until next summer to see what the trend of prices will be then.

Across the fields toward the inlet, where the grasses have turned rusty bronze and pink, where goldenrod is minting its butter-yellow sprays and riotous magenta portulacas seed themselves over the sandy patches, the rowboats are being dragged out of the canal and laid up for the winter. The sunburned sailorman who rents them says he has had a good season—and he "can't complain." He comes chugging in with his tiny motorboat, towing a string of tender-feet who have been out

tossing on the crabbing grounds for a couple of hours, patiently lowering the fishheads tied on a cord and weighted with rusty bolts. His patient and energetic wife who runs the little candy and sarsaparilla counter on the dock has ended her labours. She is glad to get back to her kitchen: during the long, busy summer days she did her family cooking on an oil stove behind the counter. The captain, as he likes to be called, is about to make his annual change from mariner to roofer, the latter being his winter trade. "It's blowing up for rain," he says, looking over his shoulder at the eastern sky. "I guess the season's pretty near over. I'll get up the rest of them boats next week."

In September the bathing is at its best. Particularly at sunset, when every one is at supper. To cross those wide fields of wiry grass that stretch down to the sand, is an amazement to the eye. Ahead of you the sea gleams purple as an Easter violet. The fields are a kind of rich palette on which every tint of pink, russet and bronze is laid in glowing variation. The softly wavering breeze, moving among the coarse stalks, gives the view a ripple and shimmer of colour like shot silk. A naturalist could find hundreds of species of flowers and grasses on those sandy meadows. There are great clumps of some bushy herb that has already turned a vivid copper colour, and catches the declining sunlight like burnished

metal. There are flecks of yellow, pink and lavender. A cool, strong odour rises from the harsh, knife-edged grasses—a curiously dry, brittle scent, familiar to all who have poked about sand dunes.

The beach itself, coloured in the last flush of the level sun, is still faintly warm to the naked foot, after the long shining of the day; but it cools rapidly. The tide is coming in, with long, seething ridges of foam, each flake and clot of crumbled water tinged with a rose-petal pink by the red sunset. All this glory of colour, of movement, of unspeakable exhilaration and serenity, is utterly lonely. The long curve of the beach stretches away northward, where a solitary orange-coloured dory is lying on the sand. The air is full of a plaintive piping of sea-birds. A gull flashes along the beach, with a pink glow on its snowy under-plumage.

At that hour the water is likely to be warmer than the air. It may be only the curiously magical effect of the horizontal light, but it seems more foamy, more full of suds, than earlier in the day. Over the green top of the waves, laced and marbled with froth, slides a layer of iridescent bubble-wash that seems quite a different substance from the water itself—like the meringue on top of a lemon pie. One can scoop it up and see it winking in points of sparkling light.

The waves come marching in. It is a calm sea,

one would have said looking down from the dunes, but to the swimmer, elbowing his way under their leaning hollows, their stature seems tremendous. The sunlight strikes into the hills of moving water, filling them with a bluish spangle and tremor of brightness. It is worth while to duck underneath and look up at the sun from under the surface, to see how the light seems to spread and clot and split in the water like sour cream poured into a cup of tea. The sun, which is so ruddy in the evening air, is a pale milky white when seen from under water.

A kind of madness of pleasure fills the heart of the solitary sunset swimmer. To splash and riot in that miraculous colour and tumult of breaking water seems an effective answer to all the grievances of earth. To float, feeling the poise and encircling support of those lapsing pillows of liquid, is mirth beyond words. To swim just beyond the line of the big breakers, dropping a foot now and then to feel that bottom is not too far away—to sprawl inward with a swashing comber while the froth boils about his shoulders—to watch the light and colour prismed in the curl and slant of every wave, and the quick vanishing of brightness and glory once the sun is off the sea—all this is the matter of poems that no one can write.

The sun drops over the flat glitter of the inland lagoons; the violet and silver and rose-flushed

foam are gone from the ocean; the sand is gray and damp and chilly. Down the line of the shore comes an airplane roaring through the upper regions of dazzling sunlight, with brightness on its varnished wings. The lighthouse at the Inlet has begun to twinkle its golden flash, and supper will soon be on the table. The solitary swimmer takes one last regretful plunge through a sluicing hill of green, and hunts out his pipe. He had left it, as the true smoker does, carefully filled, with a match-box beside it, in a dry hollow on the sand. Trailing a thread of blue reek, he plods cheerfully across the fields, taking care not to tread upon the small hoptoads that have come out to hail the evening. Behind him the swelling moon floats like a dim white lantern, pencilling the darkening water with faint scribbles of light.

But there are still a few oldtimers in Fierce-forest, cottagers who cling on until the first of October, and whose fraternal password (one may hear them saying it every time they meet) is "Sure! Best time of the year!" Through the pink flush of sunrise you may see the husbands moving soberly toward the early commuters' train, the 6:55, which is no longer crowded. (A month ago one had to reach it half an hour early in order to get a seat in the smoker.) Each one transports his satchel, and also curious bundles, for at this time of year it is the custom to make the husband carry

home each week an instalment of the family baggage, to save excess when moving day comes. One totes an oilstove; another, a scales for weighing the baby. They trudge somewhat grimly through the thin morning twilight, going back for another week at office and empty house or apartment. Leaving behind them the warm bed, the little cottage full of life and affection, they taste for a moment the nostalgic pang that sailors know so well when the ship's bow cuts the vacant horizon. Over the purple rim of sea the sun juts its scarlet disk. You may see these solitary husbands halt a moment to scan the beauty of the scene. They stand there thoughtful in the immortal loneliness of dawn. Then they climb the smoker and pinochle has its sway.

AN EARLY TRAIN

THE course of events has compelled me for several months to catch an early train at Broad Street three times a week. I call it an "early" train, but, of course, these matters are merely relative: 7:45 are the figures illuminated over the gateway—not so very precocious, perhaps; but quite rathe enough for one of Haroun-al-Raschid temper, who seldom seeks the "oblivion of repose" (Boswell's phrase) before 1 A. M.

Nothing is more pathetic in human nature than its faculty of self-deception. Winding up the alarm clock (the night before) I meditate as to the exact time to elect for its disturbing buzz. If I set it at 6:30 that will give me plenty of time to shave and reach the station with leisure for a pleasurable cup of coffee. But (so frail is the human will) when I wake at 6:30 I will think to myself, "There is plenty of time," and probably turn over for "another five minutes." This will mean a hideous spasm of awakening conscience about 7:10—an unbathed and unshaven tumult of preparation, malisons on the shoe manufacturers who

invented boots with eyelets all the way up, a frantic sprint to Sixteenth Street and one of those horrid intervals that shake the very citadel of human reason when I ponder whether it is safer to wait for a possible car or must start hotfoot for the station at once. All this is generally decided by setting the clock for 6:40. Then, if I am spry, I can be under way by 7:20 and have a little time to be philosophical at the corner of Sixteenth and Pine. Of the vile seizures of passion that shake the bosom when a car comes along, seems about to halt, and then passes without stopping—of the spiritual scars these crises leave on the soul of the victim, I cannot trust myself to speak. It does not always happen, thank goodness. One does not always have to throb madly up Sixteenth, with head retorted over one's shoulder to see if a car may still be coming, while the legs make what speed they may on sliddery paving. Sometimes the car does actually appear and one buffets aboard and is buried in a brawny mass. There is a stop, and one wonders fiercely whether a horse is down ahead, and one had better get out at once and run for it. Tightly wedged in the heart of the car, nothing can be seen. It is all very nerve-racking, and I study, for quietness of mind, the familiar advertising card of the white-bearded old man announcing "It is really very remarkable that a cigar of this quality can be had for seven cents."

Suppose, however, that fortune is with me. I descend at Market Street, and the City Hall dial, shining softly in the fast paling blue of morning, marks 7:30. Now I begin to enjoy myself. I reflect on the curious way in which time seems to stand still during the last minutes before the departure of a train. The half-hour between 7 and 7:30 has vanished in a gruesome flash. Now follow fifteen minutes of exquisite dalliance. Every few moments I look suddenly and savagely at the clock to see if it can be playing some saturnine trick. No, even now it is only 7:32. In the lively alertness of the morning mind a whole wealth of thought and accurate observation can be crammed into a few seconds. I halt for a moment at the window of that little lunchroom on Market Street (between Sixteenth and Fifteenth) where the food comes swiftly speeding from the kitchen on a moving belt. I wonder whether to have breakfast there. It is such fun to see a platter of pale yellow scrambled eggs sliding demurely beside the porcelain counter and whipped dextrously off in front of you by the presiding waiter. But the superlative coffee of the Broad Street Station lunch counter generally lures me on.

What mundane joy can surpass the pleasure of approaching the station lunch counter, with full ten minutes to satisfy a morning appetite! "Morning, colonel," says the waiter, recognizing a steady

customer. "Wheatcakes and coffee," you cry. With one deft gesture, it seems, he has handed you a glass brimming with ice water and spread out a snowy napkin. In another moment here is the coffee, with the generous jug of cream. You splash in a large lump of ice to make it cool enough to drink. Perhaps the seat next you is empty, and you put your books and papers on it, thus not having to balance them gingerly on your knees. All round you is a lusty savour of satisfaction, the tinkle of cash registers, napkins fluttering and flashing across the counters, coloured waiters darting to and fro, great clouds of steam rising where the big dish covers are raised on the cooking tables. You see the dark-brown coffee gently quivering in the glass gauge of the nickel boiler. Then here come the wheatcakes. Nowhere else on earth, I firmly believe, are they cooked to just that correct delicacy of golden brown colour; nowhere else are they so soft and light of texture, so hot, so beautifully overlaid with a smooth, almost intangible suggestion of crispness. Two golden butter pats salute the eye, and a jug of syrup. It is now 7:38.

As everyone knows, the correct thing is to start immediately on the first cake, using only syrup. The method of dealing with the other two is classic. One lifts the upper one and places a whole pat of butter on the lower cake. Then one replaces the

upper cake upon the lower, leaving the butter to its fate. In that hot and enviable embrace the butter liquefies and spreads itself, gently anointing the field of coming action. Upon the upper shield one smilingly distributes the second butter pat, knifed off into small slices for greater speed of melting. By the time the first cake has been eaten, with the syrup, the other two will be ready for manifest destiny. The butter will be docile and submissive. Now, after again making sure of the time (7:40) the syrup is brought into play and the palate has the congenial task of determining whether the added delight of melting butter outweighs the greater hotness and primal thrill of the first cake which was glossed with the syrup only. You drain your coffee to the dregs; gaze pityingly on those rushing in to snap up a breakfast before the 8 o'clock leaves for New York, pay your check, and saunter out to the train. It is 7:43.

This, to be sure, is only the curtain-raiser to the pleasures to follow. This has been a physical and carnal pleasure. Now follow delights of the mind. In the great gloomy shed wafts and twists of thick steam are jetting upward, heavily coiled in the cold air. In the train you smoke two pipes and read the morning paper. Then you are set down at Haverford. It is like a fairyland of unbelief. Trees and shrubbery are crusted and sheathed in crystal, lucid like chandeliers in the flat, thin

light. Along the fence, as you go up the hill, you marvel at the scarlet berries in the hedge, gleaming through the glassy ribs of the bushes. The old willow tree by the Conklin gate is etched against the sky like a Japanese drawing—it has a curious greenish colour beneath that gray sky. There is some mystery in all this. It seems more beautiful than a merely mortal earth vexed by sinful men has any right to be. There is some ice palace in Hans Andersen which is something like it. In a little grove, the boughs, bent down with their shining glaziery, creak softly as they sway in the moving air. The evergreens are clotted with lumps and bags of transparent icing, their fronds sag to the ground. A pale twinkling blueness sifts over distant vistas. The sky whitens in the south and points of light leap up to the eye as the wind turns a loaded branch.

A certain seriousness of demeanour is noticeable on the generally unfurrowed brows of student friends. Midyears are on and one sees them walking, freighted with precious and perishable erudition, toward the halls of trial. They seem a little oppressed with care, too preoccupied to relish the entrancing pallor of this crystallized Eden. One carries, gravely, a cushion and an alarm clock. Not such a bad theory of life, perhaps—to carry in the crises of existence a cushion of philosophy and an alarum of resolution.

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE URCHIN

SUNDAY afternoon is by old tradition dedicated to the taking of Urchins out to taste the air, and indeed there is no more agreeable pastime. And so, as the Urchin sat in his high chair and thoughtfully shovelled his spoon through meat chopped remarkably small and potatoes mashed in that curious fashion that produces a mass of soft, curly tendrils, his curators discussed the question of where he should be taken.

It was the first Sunday in March—mild and soft and tinctured with spring. "There's the botanic garden at the University," I suggested. The Urchin settled it by rattling his spoon on the plate and sliding several inches of potato into his lap. "Go see garden!" he cried. With the generous tastes of twenty-seven months he cares very little where he is taken; he can find fascination in anything; but something about the word "garden" seemed to allure him. So a little later when he had been duly habited in brown leggings, his minute

brown overcoat, and white hat with ribbons behind it, he and his curators set out. The Urchin was in excellent spirits, for he had been promised a ride on a trolley car—a glorious adventure. In one pocket he carried his private collection of talismans, including a horse-chestnut and a picture of a mouse. Also, against emergencies, a miniature handkerchief with a teddy bear embroidered in one corner and a safety pin. The expedition may be deemed to have been a success, as none of these properties were called upon or even remembered.

The car we boarded did not take us just where we expected to go, but that made little difference to the Urchin, who gazed steadfastly out of the window at a panorama of shabby streets, and offered no comment except one of extreme exultation when we passed a large poster of a cow. Admirably docile, he felt confident that the unusual conjunction of both arbiters of destiny and an impressive trolley car would in the end produce something extremely worth while. We sped across Gray's Ferry bridge—it seems strange to think that region was once so quiet, green, and rustic —transferred to another car on Woodland Avenue, past the white medley of tombstones in Woodland Cemetery, and got off at the entrance to the dormitory quadrangles at Thirty-seventh Street. We entered through the archway—the Urchin's

first introduction to an academic atmosphere. "This is the University," I said to him severely, and he was much impressed. As is his way, he conducted himself with extreme sobriety until he should get the hang of his new experience and see what it was all about. I knew from the serene gold sparkle of his brown eyes that there was plenty of larking spirit in him, waiting until he knew whether it was safe to give it play. He held my hand punctiliously while waiting to see what manner of place this University was.

A college quadrangle on a Sunday afternoon has a feeling all its own. Thin tinklings of mandolins eddy from open windows, in which young men may be seen propped up against bright-coloured cushions, always smoking, and sometimes reading with an apparent zeal which might deceive a few onlookers. But the slightest sound of footfalls on the pavement outside their rooms causes these heads to turn and scan the passers. There is always a vague hope in these youthful breasts that some damsel of notable fairness may have strayed within the bastions. Groups of ladies of youth and beauty do often walk demurely through the courts, and may be sure of hearing admiring whistles shrilled through the sunny air. When a lady walks through a college quadrangle and hears no sibilation, let her know sadly that first youth is past. Even the sedate guardianship of Scribe and Urchin

did not forfeit one Lady of Destiny her proper homage of tuneful testimonial. So be it ever!

One who inhabited college quadrangles not so immeasurably long ago, and remembers with secret pain how massively old, experienced, and worldly wise he then thought himself, can never resist a throb of amazement at the entertaining youthfulness of these young monks. How quaintly juvenile they are, and how oddly that assumption of grave superiority sits upon their golden brows! With what an inimitable air of wisdom, cynicism, ancientry, learned aloofness and desire to be observed do they stroll to and fro across the quads, so keenly aware in their inmost bosoms of the presence of visitors and determined to grant an appearance of mingled wisdom, great age, and sad doggishness! What a devil-may-care swing to the stride, what a nonchalance in the perpetual wreath of cigarette smoke, what a carefully assumed bearing of one carrying great wisdom lightly and easily casting it aside for the moment in the pursuit of some waggish trifle. "Here," those very self-conscious young visages seem to betray, "is one who might tell you all about the Holy Roman Empire, and yet is, for the moment, diverting himself with a mere mandolin." And yet, as the Lady of Destiny shrewdly observed, it is a pity they should mar their beautiful quadrangles with orange peel and scraps of paper.

We walked for some time through those stately courts of Tudor brick and then passed down the little inclined path to the botanic garden, where irises and fresh green spikes are already pushing up through the damp earth. A pale mellow sunlight lay upon the gravel walks and the Urchin resumed his customary zeal. He ran here and there along the byways, examined the rock borders with an air of scientific questioning, and watched the other children playing by the muddy pond. We found shrubbery swelling with buds, also flappers walking hatless and blanched with talcum, accompanied by Urchins of a larger growth. Both these phenomena we took to be a sign of the coming equinox.

Returning to the dormitory quadrangles, we sat down on a wooden bench to rest, while the Urchin, now convinced that a university is nothing to be awed by, scampered about on the turf. His eye was a bright jewel of roguishness, for he thought that in trotting about the grass he was doing something supremely wicked. He has been carefully trained not to err on the grass of the city square to which he is best accustomed, so this surprising and unchecked revelry quite went to his head. Across and about those wide plots of sodden turf he trotted and chuckled, a small, quaint mortal with his hat ribbons fluttering. Cheering whistles hailed him from open windows above, and he smiled to him-

self with grave dignity. Apparently, like a distinguished statesman, he regarded these tributes not as meant for himself, but for the great body of childhood he innocently represents, and indeed from which his applauders are not so inextricably severed. With the placid and unconscious happiness of a puppy he careered and meandered, without motive or method. Perhaps his underlying thought of a university, if he has any, is that it is a place where no one says "Keep Off the Grass," and, intellectually speaking, that would not be such a bad description of an institution of learning.

I don't know whether Doctor Tait McKenzie so intended it, but his appealing and beautiful statue of Young Franklin in front of the University gymnasium is admirably devised for the delight of small Urchins. While their curators take pleasure in the bronze itself, the Urchin may clamber on the different levels of the base, which is nicely adapted for the mountaineering capacity of twenty-seven months. The low brick walls before the gymnasium and the University museum are also just right for an Urchin who has recently learned the fascination of walking on something raised above the ground, provided there is a curator near by to hold his hand. And then, as one walks away toward the South Street bridge an observant Urchin may spy the delightful spectacle of a freight train travelling apparently in midair. Some day, one hopes, all

that fine tract of open space leading from the museum down to the railroad tracks may perhaps be beautified as a park or an addition to the University's quadrangle system. I don't know who owns it, but its architectural possibilities must surely make the city-planner's mouth water.

By this time the Urchin was beginning to feel a bit weary, and was glad of a lift on a parental shoulder. Then a Lombard Street car came along and took us up halfway across the bridge. So ended the Urchin's first introduction to a university education.

FALL FEVER

ABOUT this time of year, when the mellow air swoons (as the poets say) with golden languor and the landscape is tinged a soft brown like a piece of toast, we feel the onset and soft impeachment of fall fever.

Fall fever is (in our case at any rate) more insidious than the familiar disease of spring. Spring fever impels us to get out in the country; to seize a knotted cudgel and a pouchful of tobacco and agitate our limbs over the landscape. But the drowsiness of autumn is a lethargy in the true sense of that word—a forgetfulness. A forgetfulness of past discontents and future joys; a forgetfulness of toil that is gone and leisure to come; a mere breathing existence in which one stands vacantly eyeing the human scene, living in a gentle simmer of the faculties like a boiling kettle when the gas is turned low.

Fall fever, one supposes, is our inheritance from the cave man, who (like the bear and the—well, some other animal, whatever it is) went into hibernation about the first of November. Autumn with

its soft inertia lulled him to sleep. He ate a hearty meal, raked together some dry leaves, curled up and slid off until the alarm clock of April.

This agreeable disease does not last very long with the modern man. He fights bravely against it, then the frost comes along, or the coal bill, and stings him into activity. But for a few days its genial torpor may be seen (by the observant) even in our bustling modern career. When we read yesterday that Judge Audenried's court clerks had fallen asleep during ballot-counting proceedings we knew that the microbe was among us again. Keats, in his lovely Ode, describes the figure of Autumn as stretched out "on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep." Unhappily the conventions forbid city dwellers from curling up on the pavements for a cheerful nap. If one were brave enough to do so, unquestionably many would follow his example. But the urbanite has taught himself to doze upright. You may see many of us, standing dreamily before Chestnut Street show windows in the lunch hour, to all intents and purposes in a state of slumber. Yesterday, in that lucid shimmer of warmth and light, a group stood in front of a doughnut window near Ninth Street: not one of them was more than half awake. Similarly a gathering watched the three small birds who have become a traditional window ornament on Chestnut Street (they have recently moved from

an oculist to a correspondence course office) and a faint whisper of snoring arose on the sultry air. The customs of city life permit a man to stand still as long as he likes if he will only pretend to be watching something. We saw a substantial burgher pivoted by the window of Mr. Albert, the violin maker, on Ninth Street. Apparently he was studying the fine autographed photo of Patti there displayed; but when we sidled near we saw that his eyes were closed; this admirable person, who seemed to be what is known as a "busy executive" and whose desk undoubtedly carries a plate-glass sheet with the orisons of Swett Marden under it, was in a blissful doze.

Modern life (as we say) struggles against this sweet enchantment of autumn, but Nature is too strong for us. Why is it that all these strikes occur just at this time of year? The old hibernating instinct again, perhaps. The workman has a subconscious yearning to scratch together a nice soft heap of manila envelopes and lie down on that couch for a six months' ear-pounding. There are all sorts of excuses that one can make to one's self for waving farewell to toil. Only last Sunday we saw this ad in a paper:

> HEIRS WANTED. The war is over and has made many new heirs. You may be one of them. Investigate. Many now living in poverty are rich, but don't know it.

Now what could be simpler (we said to ourself as we stood contemplating those doughnuts) than to forsake our jolly old typewriter and spend a few months in "investigating" whether any one had made us his heir? It might be. Odd things have happened. Down in Washington Square, for instance (we thought), are a number of sun-warmed benches, very reposeful to the sedentary parts, on which we might recline and think over the possibility of our being rich unawares. We hastened thither, but apparently many had had the same idea. There was not a bench vacant. The same was true in Independence Square and in Franklin Square. We will never make a good loafer. There is too much competition.

So we came back, sadly, to our rolltop and fell to musing. We picked up a magazine and found some pictures showing how Mary Pickford washes her hair. "If I am sun-drying my hair," said Mary (under a photo showing her reclining in a lovely garden doing just that), "I usually have the opportunity to read a scenario or do some other duty which requires concentration." And it occurred to us that if a strain like that is put upon a weak woman we surely ought to be able to go on moiling for a while, Indian summer or not. And then we found some pictures by our favourite artist, Coles Phillips, with that lovely shimmer around the ankles, and we resolved to be strong and brave and

have pointed finger-nails. But still, in the back of our mind, the debilitating influence of fall fever was at work. We said to ourself, without the slightest thought of printing it (for it seemed to put us in a false light), that the one triumphant and unanswerable epigram of mankind, the grandest and most resolute utterance in the face of implacable fate, is the snore.

IN WEST PHILADELPHIA

CLIMBING aboard car No. 13—ominously labelled "Mt. Moriah"—I voyaged toward West Philadelphia. It was a keen day, the first snow of winter had fallen, and sparkling gushes of chill swept inward every time the side doors opened. The conductor, who gets the full benefit of this ventilation, was feeling cynical, and seeing his blue hands I didn't blame him. Long lines of ladies fumbling with their little bags, and waiting for change, stepped off one by one into the windy eddies of the street corners. One came up to pay her fare ten blocks or so before her destination, and then retired to her seat again. This puzzled the conductor and he rebuked her. The argument grew busy. To the amazement of the passengers this richly dressed female brandished lusty epithets. "You Irish mick!" she said. (One would not have believed it possible if he had not heard it.) "That's what I am, and proud of it," said he. The shopping solstice is not all fur coats and pink cheeks. If you watch the conductors in the blizzard season, and see the slings and arrows

they have to bear, you will coin a new maxim. The conductor is always right.

It is always entertaining to move for a little in a college atmosphere. I stopped at College Hall at the University and seriously contemplated slipping in to a lecture. The hallways were crowded with earnest youths of both sexes—I was a bit surprised at the number of co-eds, particularly the number with red hair—discussing the tribulations of their lot. "Think of it," said one man, "I'm a senior, and carrying twenty-three hours. Got a thesis to do, 20,000 words." On a bulletin board I observed the results of a "General Intelligence Exam." It appears that 1,770 students took part. They were listed by numbers, not by names. It was not stated what the perfect mark would have been; the highest grade attained was 159, by Mr. (or Miss?) 735. The lowest mark was 23. I saw that both 440 and 1124 got the mark of 149. If these gentlemen (or ladies) are eager to play off the tie, it would be a pleasure to arrange a deciding competition for them. The elaborate care with which the boys and girls ignore one another as they pass in the halls was highly delightful, and reminded me of exactly the same thing at Oxford. But I saw the possible beginning of true romance in the following notice on one of the boards:

> WANTED: Names and addresses of ten nice American university students who must remain in Phila-

> delphia over Christmas, away from home, to be invited to a Christmas Eve party to help entertain some Bryn Mawr College girls in one of the nicest homes in a suburb of Philadelphia.

Certainly there is a stage set for a short story. Perhaps not such a short one, either.

Naturally I could not resist a visit to the library, where most of the readers seemed wholly absorbed, though one student was gaping forlornly over a volume of Tennyson. I found an intensely amusing book, *Who's Who in Japan*, a copy of which would be a valuable standby to a newspaper paragrapher in his bad moments. For instance:

> SASAKI, TETSUTARO: One of the highest taxpayers of Fukushima-ken, President of the Hongu Reeling Partnership, Director of the Dai Nippon Radium Water Co.; brewer, reeler; born Aug., 1860.
>
> SAKURAI, ICHISAKU: Member of the Niigata City Council; Director of the Niigata Gas Co., Niigata Savings Bank. Born June, 1872, Studied Japanese and Chinese classics and arithmetic. At present also he connects with the Niigata Orphanage and various other philanthropic bodies. Was imprisoned by acting contrary to the act of exposive compound for seven years. Recreations: reading, Western wine.

Relying on my apparent similarity to the average undergrad, I plunged into the sancta of Houston Hall and bought a copy of the *Punch Bowl*. What that sprightly journal calls "A little group of

Syria's thinkers" was shooting pool. The big fireplaces, like most fireplaces in American colleges, don't seem to be used. They don't even show any traces of ever having been used, a curious contrast to the always blazing hearths of English colleges. The latter, however, are more necessary, as in England there is usually no other source of warmth. A bitter skirmish of winds, carrying powdered snow dust, nipped round the gateways of the dormitories and Tait McKenzie's fine statue of Whitefield stood sharply outlined against a cold blue sky. I lunched at a varsity hash counter on Spruce Street and bought tobacco in a varsity drug store, where a New York tailor, over for the day, was cajoling students into buying his "snappy styles" in time for Christmas. There is no more interesting game than watching a lot of college men, trying to pick out those who may be of some value to the community in future—the scientists, poets, and teachers of the next generation. The well-dressed youths one sees in the varsity drug stores are not generally of this type.

The Evans School of Dentistry at Fortieth and Spruce is a surprising place. Its grotesque gargoyles, showing (with true mediæval humour) the sufferings of tooth patients, are the first thing one notices. Then one finds the museum, in which is housed Doctor Thomas W. Evans's collection of paintings and curios brought back from France.

Unfortunately there seems to be no catalogue of the items, so that there is no way of knowing what interesting associations belong to them. But most surprising of all is to find the travelling carriage of the Empress Eugenie in which she fled from France in the fatal September days of 1870. She spent her last night in France at the home of Doctor Evans, and there is a spirited painting by Dupray showing her leaving his house the next morning, ushered into the carriage by the courtly doctor. The old black barouche, or whatever one calls it, seems in perfect condition still, with the empress's monogram on the door panel. Only the other day we read in the papers that the remarkable old lady (now in her ninety-fourth year) has been walking about Paris, revisiting well-known scenes. How it would surprise her to see her carriage again here in this University building in West Philadelphia. The whole museum is delightfully French in flavour; as soon as one enters one seems to step back into the curiously bizarre and tragic extravagance of the Second Empire.

One passes into the dignified and placid residence section of Spruce and Pine streets, with its distinctly academic air. Behind those quiet walls one suspects bookcases and studious professors and all the delightful passions of the mind. On Baltimore Avenue the wintry sun shone white and

cold; in Clark Park, Charles Dickens wore a little cap of snow, and Little Nell looked more pathetic than ever. There is a breath of mystery about Baltimore Avenue. What does that large sign mean, in front of a house near Clark Park—THE EASTERN TRAVELLERS? Then one comes to the famous shop of S. F. Hiram, the Dodoneaean Shoemaker he calls himself. This wise coloured man has learned the advertising advantages of the unusual. His placard reads:

Originator of that famous Dobrupolyi System of repairing.

When one enters and asks to know more about this system, he points to another placard, which says:

It assumes the nature and character of an appellative noun, and carries the article The System.

His shop contains odd curios as well as the usual traffic of a cobbler. "The public loves to be hoodwinked," he adds sagely.

THE ANATOMY OF MANHATTAN

SHE is the only city whose lovers live always in a mood of wonder and expectancy. There are others where one may sink peacefully, contentedly, into the life of the town, affectionate and understanding of its ways. But she, the woman city, who is bold enough to say he understands her? The secret of her thrilling and inscrutable appeal has never been told. How could it be? She has always been so much greater than any one who has lived with her. (Shall we mention Walt Whitman as the only possible exception? O. Henry came very near to her, but did he not melodramatize her a little, sometimes cheapen her by his epigrammatic appraisal, fit her too neatly into his plot? Kipling seemed to see her only as the brutal, heedless wanton.) Truly the magic of her spell can never be exacted. She changes too rapidly, day by day. Realism, as they call it, can never catch the boundaries of her pearly beauty. She needs a mystic.

No city so challenges and debilitates the imagination. Here, where wonder is a daily companion,

desire to tell her our ecstasy becomes at last only a faint pain in the mind. If you would mute a poet's lyre, put him on a ferry from Jersey City some silver April morning; or send him aboard at Liberty Street in an October dusk. Poor soul, his mind will buzz (for years to come) after adequate speech to tell those cliffs and scarps, amethyst and lilac in the mingled light; the clear topaz chequer of window panes; the dull bluish olive of the river, streaked and crinkled with the churn of the screw! Many a poet has come to her in the wooing passion. Give him six months, he is merely her Platonist. He lives content with placid companionship. Where are his adjectives, his verbs? That inward knot of amazement, what speech can unravel it?

Her air, when it is typical, is light, dry, cool. It is pale, it is faintly tinctured with pearl and opal. Heaven is unbelievably remote; the city itself daring so high, heaven lifts in a cautious remove. Light and shadow are fantastically banded, striped and patchworked among her cavern streets; a cool, deep gloom is cut across with fierce jags and blinks of brightness. She smiles upon man who takes his ease in her colossal companionship. Her clean soaring perpendiculars call the eye upward. One wanders as a botanist in a tropical forest. That great smooth groinery of the Pennsylvania Station train shed: is it not the arching fronds of iron palm

trees? Oh, to be a botanist of this vivid jungle, spread all about one, anatomist of the ribs and veins that run from the great backbone of Broadway!

To love her, one thinks, is to love one's fellows; each of them having some unknown share in her loveliness. Any one of her streets would be the study and delight of a lifetime. To speak at random, we think of that little world of brightness and sound bourgeois cheer that spreads around the homely Verdi statue at Seventy-third Street. We have a faithful affection for that neighbourhood, for reasons of our own. Within a radius, thereabouts, of a quarter-mile each way, we could live a year and learn new matters every day. They call us a hustling folk. Observe the tranquil afternoon light in those brownstone byways. Pass along leisurely Amsterdam Avenue, the region of small and genial shops, Amsterdam Avenue of the many laundries. See the children trooping upstairs to their own room at the St. Agnes branch of the Public Library. See the taxi drivers, sitting in their cars alongside the Verdi grass plot (a rural breath of new-mown turf sweetening the warm, crisp air) and smoking pipes. Every one of them is to us as fascinating as a detective story. What a hand they have had in ten thousand romances. At this very moment, what quaint and many-stranded destinies may hail them and drive off? But there they

sit, placid enough, with a pipe and the afternoon paper. The light, fluttering dresses of enigmatic fair ones pass gaily on the pavement. Traffic flows, divides, and flows on, a sparkling river. Here is that mystery, a human being, buying a cigar. Here is another mystery asking for a glass of frosted chocolate. Why is it that we cannot accost that tempting riddle and ask him to give us an accurate précis of his life to date? And that red-haired burly sage, he who used to bake the bran muffins in the little lunchroom near by, and who lent us his Robby Burns one night—what has become of him?

So she teases us, so she allures. Sometimes, on the L, as one passes along that winding channel where the walls and windows come so close, there is a felicitous sense of being immersed, surrounded, drowned in a great, generous ocean of humanity. It is a fine feeling. All life presses around one, the throb and the problem are close, are close. Who could be weary, who could be at odds with life, in such an embrace of destiny? The great tall sides of buildings fly open, the human hive is there, beautiful and arduous beyond belief. Here is our worship and here our lasting joy, here is our immortality of encouragement. Yes, perhaps O. Henry did say the secret after all: "He saw no longer a rabble, but his brothers seeking the ideal."

BROOKLYN BRIDGE

A WINDY day, one would have said in the dark channels of downtown ways. In the chop house on John Street, lunch-time patrons came blustering in, wrapped in overcoats and mufflers, with something of that air of ostentatious hardiness that men always assume on coming into a warm room from a cold street. Thick chops were hissing on the rosy grill at the foot of the stairs. In one of the little crowded stalls a man sat with a glass of milk. It was the first time we had been in that chop house for several years . . . it doesn't seem the same. As Mr. Wordsworth said, it is not now as it hath been of yore. But still,

> The homely Nurse doth all she can
> To make her foster-child, her Inn-mate Man,
> Forget the glories he hath known.

It's a queer thing that all these imitation beers taste to us exactly as real beer did the first time we tasted it (we were seven years old) and shuddered. "Two glasses of cider," we said to the comely serving maid. Alas

That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive.

There is a nice point of etiquette involved in lunching in a crowded chop house. Does the fact of having bought and eaten a moderate meal entitle one to sit with one's companion for a placid talk and smoke afterward? Or is one compelled to relinquish the table as soon as one is finished, to make place for later comers? These last are standing menacingly near by, gazing bitterly upon us as we look over the card and debate the desirability of having some tapioca pudding. But our presiding Juno has already settled the matter, and made courtesy a matter of necessity. "These gentlemen will be through in a moment," she says to the new candidates. Our companion, the amiable G—— W——, was just then telling us of a brand of synthetic whisky now being distilled by a famous tavern of the underworld. The superlative charm of this beverage seems to be the extreme rigidity it imparts to the persevering communicant. "What does it taste like?" we asked. "Rather like gnawing furniture," said G—— W——. "It's like a long, healthy draught of shellac. It seems to me that it would be less trouble if you offered the barkeep fifty cents to hit you over the head with a hammer. The general effect would be about the same, and you wouldn't feel nearly so bad in the morning."

A windy day, and perishing chill, we thought as we strolled through the gloomy caverns and crypts underneath the Brooklyn Bridge. Those twisted vistas seen through the archways give an impression of wrecked Louvain. A great bonfire was burning in the middle of the street. Under the Pearl Street elevated the sunlight drifted through the girders in a lively chequer, patterning piles of gray-black snow with a criss-cross of brightness. We had wanted to show our visitor Franklin Square, which he had always thought of as a trimly gardened plot surrounded by quiet little old-fashioned houses with brass knockers, and famous authors tripping in and out. As we stood examining the façade of Harper and Brothers, our friend grew nervous. He was carrying under his arm the dummy of an "export catalogue" for a big brass foundry, that being his line of work. "They'll think we're free verse poets trying to get up courage enough to go in and submit a manuscript," he said, and dragged us away.

A windy day, we had said in the grimy recesses of Cliff and Dover streets. (Approaching this sentiment for the third time, perhaps we may be permitted to accomplish our thought and say what we had in mind.) But up on the airy decking of the Brooklyn Bridge, where we repaired with G—— W—— for a brief stroll, the afternoon seemed mild and tranquil. It is a mistake to assume that the

open spaces are the windier. The subway is New York's home of Æolus, and most of the gusts that buffet us on the streets are merely hastening round a corner in search of the nearest subway entrance so that they can get down there where they feel they belong. Up on the bridge it was plain to perceive that the March sunshine had elements of strength. The air was crisp but genial. A few pedestrians were walking resolutely toward the transpontine borough; the cop on duty stood outside his little cabin with the air of one ungrieved by care. Behind us stood the high profiles of the lower city, sharpened against the splendidly clear blue sky which is New York's special blessing. On the water moved a large tug, towing barges. Smoke trailed behind it in the same easy and comfortable way that tobacco reek gushes over a man's shoulder when he walks across a room puffing his pipe.

The bridge is a curiously delightful place to watch the city from. Walking toward the central towers seems like entering a vast spider's web. The footway between the criss-cross cables draws one inward with a queer fascination, the perspective diminishing the network to the eye so that it seems to tighten round you as you advance. Even when there is but little traffic the bridge is never still. It is alive, trembling, vibrant, the foot moves with a springy recoil. One feels the lift and strain of gigantic forces, and looks in amazement on the

huge sagging hawsers that carry the load. The bars and rods quiver, the whole lively fabric is full of a tremor, but one that conveys no sense of insecureness. It trembles as a tree whispers in a light air.

And of the view from the bridge, it is too sweeping to carry wholly in mind. Best, one thinks, it is seen in a winter dusk, when the panes of Manhattan's mountains are still blazing against a crystal blue-green sky, and the last flush of an orange sunset lingers in the west. Such we saw it once, coming over from Brooklyn, very hungry after walking in most of the way from Jamaica, and pledged in our own resolve not to break fast until reaching a certain inn on Pearl Street where they used to serve banana omelets. Dusk simplifies the prospect, washes away the lesser units, fills in the foreground with obliterating shadow, leaves only the monstrous sierras of Broadway jagged against the vault. It deepens this incredible panorama into broad sweeps of gold and black and peacock blue which one may file away in memory, tangled eyries of shining windows swimming in empty air. As seen in the full brilliance of noonday the bristle of detail is too bewildering to carry in one clutch of the senses. The eye is distracted by the abysses between buildings, by the uneven elevation of the summits, by the jumbled compression of the streets. In the vastness of the scene one looks in vain for some guiding principle of arrangement by

which vision can focus itself. It is better not to study this strange and disturbing outlook too minutely, lest one lose what knowledge of it one has. Let one do as the veteran prowlers of the bridge: stroll pensively to and fro in the sun, taking man's miracles for granted, exhilarated and content.

HOUSE-HUNTING

A CURIOUS vertigo afflicts the mind of the house-hunter. In the first place, it is sufficiently maddening to see the settled homes of other happier souls, all apparently so firmly rooted in a warm soil of contentment while he floats, an unhappy sea-urchin, in an ocean of indecision. Furthermore, how confusing (to one who likes to feel himself somewhat securely established in a familiar spot) the startling panorama of possible places in which he visualizes himself. One day it is Great Neck, the next it is Nutley; one day Hollis, the next Englewood; one day Bronxville, and then Garden City. As the telephone rings, or the suasive accents of friendly realtors expound the joys and glories of various regions, his uneasy imagination flits hoppingly about the compass, conceiving his now vanished household goods reassembled and implanted in these contrasting scenes.

Startling scenarios are filmed in his reeling mind while he listens, over the tinkling wire, to the enumeration of rooms, baths, pantries, mortgages, commuting schedules, commodious closets, open fireplaces, and what not. In the flash and corusca-

tion of thought he has transported his helpless family to Yonkers, or to Manhasset, or to Forest Hills, or wherever it may be, and tries to focus and clarify his vision of what it would all be like. He sees himself (in a momentary close-up) commuting on the bland and persevering Erie, or hastening hotly for a Liberty Street ferry, or changing at Jamaica (that mystic ritual of the Long Island brotherhood). For an instant he is settled again, with a modest hearth to return to at dusk . . . and then the sorrowful compliment is paid him and he wonders how the impression got abroad that he is a millionaire.

There is one consoling aspect of his perplexity, however, and that is the friendly intercourse he has with high-spirited envoys who represent real estate firms and take him voyaging to see "properties" in the country. For these amiable souls he expresses his candid admiration. Just as when one contemplates the existence of the doctors one knows, one can never imagine them ill, so one cannot conceive of the friendly realtor as in any wise distressed or grieved by the problems of the home. There is something Olympian about them, happy creatures! They deal only in severely "restricted" tracts. They have a stalwart and serene optimism. Odd as it seems, one of these friends told us that some people are so malign as to waste the time of real estate men by going out to look at

houses in the country without the slightest intention of "acting." As a kind of amusement, indeed! A harmless way of passing an afternoon, of getting perhaps a free motor ride and enjoying the novelty of seeing what other people's houses look like inside. But our friend was convinced of one humble inquirer's passionate sincerity when he saw him gaily tread the ice floes of rustic Long Island in these days of slush and slither.

How do these friends of ours, who see humanity in its most painful and distressing gesture (i. e., when it is making up its mind to part with some money), manage to retain their fine serenity and blitheness of spirit? They have to contemplate all the pathetic struggles of mortality, for what is more pathetic than the spectacle of a man trying to convince a real estate agent that he is not really a wealthy creature masking millions behind an eccentric pose of humility? Our genial adviser Grenville Kleiser, who has been showering his works upon us, has classified all possible mental defects as follows:

(a) Too easy acquiescence
(b) A mental attitude of contradiction
(c) Undue scepticism
(d) A dogmatic spirit
(e) Lack of firmness of mind
(f) A tendency to take extreme views
(g) Love of novelty; that is, of what is foreign, ancient, unusual, or mysterious.

All these serious weaknesses of judgment may be discerned, in rapid rotation, in the mind of the house-hunter. It would be only natural, we think, if the real estate man were to tell him to go away and study Mr. Kleiser's "How to Build Mental Power." In the meantime, the vision of the home he had dreamed of becomes fainter and fainter in the seeker's mind—like the air of a popular song he has heard whistled about the streets, but does not know well enough to reproduce. How he envies the light-hearted robins, whose house-hunting consists merely in a gay flitting from twig to twig. Yet, even in his disturbance and nostalgia of spirit, he comforts himself with the common consolation of his cronies—"Oh, well, one always finds something"—and thus (in the words of good Sir Thomas Browne) teaches his haggard and unreclaimed reason to stoop unto the lure of Faith.

ON BEING IN A HURRY

NEW YORK is a perplexing city to loaf in. (Walt Whitman if he came back to Mannahatta would soon get brain fever.) During the middle hours of the day, at any rate, it is almost impossible to idle with the proper spirit and completeness. There is a prevailing bustle and skirmish that "exerts a compulsion," as President Wilson would say. The air is electric and nervous. We have often tried to dawdle gently about the neighbourhood of the City Hall in the lunch hour, to let the general form and spirit of that clearing among the cliffs sink into our mind, so that we could get some picture of it. We have sat under a big brown umbrella, to have our shoes shined, when we had nothing more important to do than go to the doughnut foundry on Park Row and try some of those feminine combinations of foods they have there, such as sponge cake with whipped cream and chocolate fudge. And in a few seconds we have found ourself getting all stirred up and crying loudly to the artist that we only wanted a once-over, as we had an important appointment.

You have to put a very heavy brake on your spirit in downtown New York or you find yourself dashing about in a prickle of excitement, gloriously happy just to be in a hurry, without particularly caring whither you are hastening, or why.

One of the odd things about being in a hurry is that it seems so fiercely important when you yourself are the hurrier and so comically ludicrous when it is someone else. We see our friend Artaxerxes scorching up Church Street and we scream with laughter at him, because we know perfectly well that there is absolutely not one of his affairs important enough to cause him to buzz along like that. We look after him with a sort of mild and affectionate pity for a deluded creature who thinks that his concerns are of such glorious magnitude. And then, a few hours later, we find ourself in a subway car with only ten minutes to catch the train for Salamis at Atlantic Avenue. And what is our state of mind? We stand, gritting our teeth (we are too excited to sit, even if there were a seat) and holding our watch. The whole train, it seems to us, is occupied by invalids, tottering souls and lumbago cripples, who creep off at the stations as though five seconds made not the slightest difference. We glare and fume and could gladly see them all maced in sunder with battle-axes. Nothing, it seems to us, could soothe our bitter hunger for haste but to have a brilliant Lexington

Avenue express draw up at the platform with not a soul in it. Out would step a polite guard, looking at his watch. "You want to catch a train at 5:27?" he asks. "Yes, sir, yes, sir; step aboard." All the other competitors are beaten back with knotted thongs and we are ushered to a seat. The bells go chiming in quick sequence up the length of the train and we are off at top speed, flying wildly past massed platforms of indignant people. We draw up at Atlantic Avenue, and the solitary passenger, somewhat appeased, steps off. "Compliments of the Interborough, sir," says the guard.

The commuter, urgently posting toward the 5:27, misses the finest flavour of the city's life, for it is in the two or three hours after office work is over that the town is at her best. What a spry and smiling mood is shown along the pavements, particularly on these clear, warm evenings when the dropping sun pours a glowing tide of soft rosy light along the cross-town streets. There is a cool lightness in the air; restaurants are not yet crowded (it is, let us say, a little after six) and beside snowy tablecloths the waiters stand indulgently with folded arms. Everybody seems in a blithe and spirited humour. Work is over for the day, and now what shall we do for amusement? This is the very peak of living, it seems to us, as we sally cheerily along the street. It is like the beginning of an O. Henry story. The streets are

fluttering with beautiful women; light summer frocks are twinkling in the busy frolic air. Oh, to be turned loose at the corner of Broadway and Thirty-second Street at 6:15 o'clock of a June evening, with nothing to do but follow the smile of adventure to the utmost! Thirty-second, we might add, is our favourite street in New York. It saddens us to think that the old boarding house on the corner of Madison Avenue is vanished now and all those quaint and humorous persons dispersed. We can still remember the creak of the long stairs and the clink of a broken slab in the tiled flooring of the hall as one walked down to the dining room.

Affection for any particular street largely depends on the associations it has accumulated in one's mind. For several years most of our adventures in New York centred round Thirty-second Street; but its physique has changed so much lately that it has lost some of its appeal. We remember an old stoneyard that used to stand where the Pennsylvania Hotel is now, a queer jumbled collection of odd carvings and relics. At the front door there was a bust of Pan on a tall pedestal, which used to face us with a queer crooked grin twice a day, morning and evening. We had a great affection for that effigy, and even wrote a little piece about him in one of the papers, for which we got about $4 at a time when it was considerably needed. We used to say to ourself

that some day when we had a home in the country we would buy Pan and set him in a Long Island garden where he would feel more at home than in the dusty winds of Thirty-second Street. Time went on and we disappeared from our old haunts, and when we came back Pan had vanished, too. You may imagine our pleasure when we found him again the other day standing in front of a chop house on Forty-fourth Street.

But one great addition to the delights of the Thirty-second Street region is the new and shining white tunnel that leads one from the Penn Station subway platform right into the heart of what used (we think) to be called Greeley Square. It is so dazzling and candid in its new tiling that it seems rather like a vast hospital corridor. One emerges through the Hudson Tube station and perhaps sets one's course for a little restaurant on Thirty-fifth Street which always holds first place in our affection. It is somewhat declined from its former estate, for the upper floors, where the violent orchestra was and the smiling little dandruffian used to sing solos when the evening grew glorious, are now rented to a feather and ostrich plume factory. But the old basement is still there, much the same in essentials, by which we mean the pickled beet appetizers, the minestrone soup, the delicious soft bread with its brittle crust, and the thick slices of rather pale roast beef swim-

ming in thin, pinkish gravy. And the three old French waiters, hardened in long experience of the frailties of mortality, smile to see a former friend. One, grinning upon us rather bashfully, recalls the time when there was a hilarious Oriental wedding celebrating in a private room upstairs and two young men insisted on going in to dance with the bride. He has forgiven various pranks, we can see, though he was wont to be outraged at the time. "Getting very stout," he says, beaming down at us. "You weigh a hundred pounds more than you used to." This is not merely cruel; it is untrue. We refrain from retorting on the growth of his bald spot.

SUNDAY MORNING

IT WAS a soft, calm morning of sunshine and placid air. Clear and cool, it was "a Herbert Spencer of a day," as H. G. Wells once remarked. The vista of West Ninety-eighth Street, that engaging alcove in the city's enormous life, was all freshness and kempt tranquillity, from the gray roof of the old training ship at the river side up to the tall red spire near Columbus Avenue. This pinnacle, which ripens to a fine claret colour when suffused with sunset, we had presumed to be a church tower, but were surprised, on exploration, to find it a standpipe of some sort connected with the Croton water system.

Sunday morning in this neighbourhood has its own distinct character. There is a certain air of luxurious ease in the picture. One has a feeling that in those tall apartment houses there are a great many ladies taking breakfast in negligee. They are wearing (if one may trust the shop windows along Broadway) boudoir caps and mules. Mules, like their namesakes in the animal world, are hybrid things, the offspring of a dancing pump and a

bedroom slipper. They are distinctly futile, but no matter, no matter. Wearing mules, however, is not a mere vanity; it is a form of physical culture, for these skimpish little things are always disappearing under the bed, and crawling after them keeps one slender. Again we say, no matter. This is no concern of ours.

Near Broadway a prosperous and opulently tailored costume emerges from an apartment house: cutaway coat, striped trousers, very long pointed patent leather shoes with lilac cloth tops. Within this gear, we presently see, is a human being, in the highest spirits. "All set!" he says, joining a group of similars waiting by a shining limousine. Among these, one lady of magnificently millinered aspect, and a smallish man in very new and shiny riding boots, of which he is grandly conscious. There are introductions. "Mr. Goldstone, meet Mrs. Silverware." They are met. There is a flashing of eyes. Three or four silk hats simultaneously leap into the shining air, are flourished and replaced. The observer is aware of the prodigious gaiety and excitement of life. All climb into the car and roll away down Broadway. All save the little man in riding boots. He is left on the sidewalk, gallantly waving his hand. Come, we think, he is going riding. A satiny charger waits somewhere round the corner. We will follow and see. He slaps his hunting crop against his glorious boots, which

are the hue of quebracho wood. No; to our chagrin, he descends into the subway.

We sit on the shoeshining stand on Ninety-sixth Street, looking over the Sunday papers. Very odd, in the adjoining chairs men are busily engaged polishing shoes that have nobody in them, not visibly, at any rate. Perhaps Sir Oliver is right after all. While we are not watching, the beaming Italian has inserted a new pair of laces for us. Long afterward, at bedtime, we find that he has threaded them in that unique way known only to shoe merchants and polishers, by which every time they are tied and untied one end of the lace gets longer and the other shorter. Life is full of needless complexities. We descend the hill. Already (it is 9:45 A. M.) men are playing tennis on the courts at the corner of West End Avenue. A great wagon crammed with scarlet sides of beef comes stumbling up the hill, drawn, with difficulty, by five horses.

When we get down to the Ninety-Sixth Street pier we see the barque *Windrush* lying near by with the airy triangles of her rigging pencilled against the sky, and look amorously on the gentle curve of her strakes (if that is what they are). We feel that it would be a fine thing to be off soundings, greeting the bounding billow, not to say the bar-room steward; and yet, being a cautious soul of reservations all compact, we must

admit that about the time we got abreast of New Dorp we would be homesick for our favourite subway station.

The pier, despite its deposit of filth, bales of old shoes, reeking barrels, scows of rubbish, sodden papers, boxes of broken bottles and a thick paste of dust and ash-powder everywhere is a happy lounging ground for a few idlers on Sunday morning. A large cargo steamer, the *Eclipse*, lay at the wharf, standing very high out of the water. Three small boys were watching a peevish old man tending his fishing lines, fastened to wires with little bells on them. "What do you catch here?" we said. Just then one of the little bells gave a cracked tinkle and the angler pulled up a small fish wriggling briskly, about three inches long. This seemed to anger him. He seemed to consider himself in some way humiliated by the incident. He grunted. One of the small boys was tactful. "Oh, gee!" he said. "Sometimes you catch fish that long," indicating a length which began at about a yard and diminished to about eighteen inches as he meditated. "I don't know what kind they are," he said. "They're not trouts, but some other kind of fish."

This started the topic of relative sizes, always fascinating to small boys. "That's a pretty big boat," said one, craning up at the tall stem of the *Eclipse*. "Oh, gee, that ain't big!" said another.

"You ought to see some of the Cunard boats, the *Olympic* or the *Baltic*."

On Riverside Drive horseback riders were cantering down the bridlepath, returning from early outings. The squirrels, already grossly overfed, were brooding languidly that another day of excessive peanuts was at hand. Behind a rapidly spinning limousine pedalled a grotesquely humped bicyclist, using the car as a pacemaker. He throbbed fiercely just behind the spare tire, with his face bent down into a rich travelling cloud of gasoline exhaust. An odd way of enjoying one's self! Children were coming out in troops, with their nurses, for the morning air. Here was a little boy with a sailor hat, and on the band a gilt legend that was new to us. Instead of the usual naval slogan, it simply said *Democracy*. This interested us, as later in the day we saw another, near the goldfish pond in Central Park. Behind the cashier's grill of a Broadway drug store the good-tempered young lady was reading Zane Grey. "I love his books," she said, "but they make me want to break loose and go out West."

ON GOING TO BED

ONE of the characters in *The Moon and Sixpence* remarked that he had faithfully lived up to the old precept about doing every day two things you heartily dislike; for, said he, every day he had got up and he had gone to bed.

It is a sad thing that as soon as the hands of the clock have turned ten the shadow of going to bed begins to creep over the evening. We have never heard bedtime spoken of with any enthusiasm. One after another we have seen a gathering disperse, each person saying (with an air of solemn resignation): "Well, I guess I'll go to bed." But there was no hilarity about it. It is really rather touching how they cling to the departing skirts of the day that is vanishing under the spinning shadow of night.

This is odd, we repeat, for sleep is highly popular among human beings. The reluctance to go to one's couch is not at all a reluctance to slumber, for almost all of us will doze happily in an armchair or on a sofa, or even festooned on the floor with a

couple of cushions. But the actual and formal yielding to sheets and blankets is to be postponed to the last possible moment.

The devil of drowsiness is at his most potent, we find, about 10:30 P. M. At this period the human carcass seems to consider that it has finished its cycle, which began with so much courage nearly sixteen hours before. It begins to slack and the mind halts on a dead centre every now and then, refusing to complete the revolution. Now there are those who hold that this is certainly the seemly and appointed time to go to bed and they do so as a matter of routine. These are, commonly, the happier creatures, for they take the tide of sleep at the flood and are borne calmly and with gracious gentleness out to great waters of nothingness. They push off from the wharf on a tranquil current and nothing more is to be seen or heard of these voyagers until they reappear at the breakfast table digging lustily into their grapefruit.

These people are happy, aye, in a brutish and sedentary fashion, but they miss the admirable adventures of those more embittered wrestlers who will not give in without a struggle. These latter suffer severe pangs between 10:30 and about 11:15 while they grapple with their fading faculties and seek to reëstablish the will on its tottering throne. This requires courage stout, valour unbending. Once you yield, be it ever so little, to the tempter,

you are lost. And here our poor barren clay plays us false, undermining the intellect with many a trick and wile. "I will sit down for a season in that comfortable chair," the creature says to himself, "and read this sprightly novel. That will ease my mind and put me in humour for a continuance of lively thinking." And the end of that man is a steady nasal buzz from the bottom of the chair where he has collapsed, an unsightly object and a disgrace to humanity. This also means a big bill from the electric light company at the end of the month. In many such ways will his corpus bewray him, leading him by plausible self-deceptions into a pitfall of sleep, whence he is aroused about 3 A. M. when the planet turns over on the other side. Only by stiff perseverance and rigid avoidance of easy chairs may the critical hour between 10:30 and 11:30 be safely passed. Tobacco, a self-brewed pot of tea, and a browsing along bookshelves (remain standing and do not sit down with your book) are helps in this time of struggle. Even so, there are some happily drowsy souls who can never cross these shallows alone without grounding on the Lotus Reefs. Our friend J—— D—— K——, magnificent creature, was (when we lived with him) so potently hypnophil that, even erect and determined at his bookcase and urgently bent upon Brann's *Iconoclast* or some other literary irritant, sleep would seep through his pores and

he would fall with a crash, lying there in unconscious bliss until someone came in and prodded him up, reeling and ashamed.

But, as we started to say, those who survive this drastic weeding out which Night imposes upon her wooers—so as to cull and choose only the truly meritorious lovers—experience supreme delights which are unknown to their snoring fellows. When the struggle with somnolence has been fought out and won, when the world is all-covering darkness and close-pressing silence, when the tobacco suddenly takes on fresh vigour and fragrance and the books lie strewn about the table, then it seems as though all the rubbish and floating matter of the day's thoughts have poured away and only the bright, clear, and swift current of the mind itself remains, flowing happily and without impediment. This perfection of existence is not to be reached very often; but when properly approached it may be won. It is a different mind that one uncovers then, a spirit which is lucid and hopeful, to which (for a few serene hours) time exists not. The friable resolutions of the day are brought out again and recemented and chiselled anew. Surprising schemes are started and carried through to happy conclusion, lifetimes of amazement are lived in a few passing ticks. There is one who at such moments resolves, with complete sincerity, to start at one end of the top shelf and read again

all the books in his library, intending this time really to extract their true marrow. He takes a clean sheet of paper and sets down memoranda of all the people he intends to write to, and all the plumbers and what not that he will call up the next day. And the next time this happy seizure attacks him he will go through the same gestures again without surprise and without the slightest mortification. And then, having lived a generation of good works since midnight struck, he summons all his resolution and goes to bed.

THE PERFECT READER

ON CHRISTMAS EVE, while the Perfect Reader sits in his armchair immersed in a book—so absorbed that he has let the fire go out—I propose to slip gently down the chimney and leave this tribute in his stocking. It is not a personal tribute. I speak, on behalf of the whole fraternity of writers, this word of gratitude—and envy.

No one who has ever done any writing, or has any ambition toward doing so, can ever be a Perfect Reader. Such a one is not disinterested. He reads, inevitably, in a professional spirit. He does not surrender himself with complete willingness of enjoyment. He reads "to see how the other fellow does it"; to note the turn of a phrase, the cadence of a paragraph; carrying on a constant subconscious comparison with his own work. He broods constantly as to whether he himself, in some happy conjuncture of quick mind and environing silence and the sudden perfect impulse, might have written something like that. He is (poor devil) confessedly selfish. On every page he is aware of his

own mind running with him, tingling him with needle-pricks of conscience for the golden chapters he has never written. And so his reading is, in a way, the perfection of exquisite misery—and his writing also. When he writes, he yearns to be reading; when he reads, he yearns to be writing.

But the Perfect Reader, for whom all fine things are written, knows no such delicate anguish. When he reads, it is without any *arrière pensée*, any twingeing consciousness of self. I like to think of one Perfect Reader of my acquaintance. He is a seafaring man, and this very evening he is in his bunk, at sea, the day's tasks completed. Over his head is a suitable electric lamp. In his mouth is a pipe with that fine wine-dark mahogany sheen that resides upon excellent briar of many years' service. He has had (though I speak only by guess) a rummer of hot toddy to celebrate the greatest of all Evenings. At his elbow is a porthole, brightly curtained with a scrap of clean chintz, and he can hear the swash of the seas along his ship's tall side. And now he is reading. I can see him reading. I know just how his mind feels! Oh, the Perfect Reader! There is not an allusion that he misses; in all those lovely printed words he sees the subtle secrets that a lesser soul would miss. He (bless his heart!) is not thinking how he himself would have written it; his clear, keen, outreaching mind is intent only to be one in spirit with the invisible

and long-dead author. I tell you, if there is anywhere a return of the vanished, it is then, at such moments, over the tilted book held by the Perfect Reader.

And how quaint it is that he should diminish himself so modestly. "Of course" (he says), "I'm only a Reader, and I don't know anything about writing——" Why, you adorable creature, *You* are our court of final appeal, you are the one we come to, humbly, to know whether, anywhere in our miserable efforts to set out our unruly hearts in parallel lines, we have done an honest thing. What do we care for what (most of) the critics say? They (we know only too well) are not criticizing *us*, but, unconsciously, themselves. They skew their dreams into their comment, and blame us for not writing what they once wanted to. You we can trust, for you have looked at life largely and without pettifogging qualms. The parallel lines of our eager pages meet at Infinity—that is, in the infinite understanding and judgment of the Perfect Reader.

The enjoyment of literature is a personal communion; it cannot be outwardly instilled. The utmost the critic can do is read the marriage service over the reader and the book. The union is consummated, if at all, in secret. But now and then there comes up the aisle a new Perfect Reader, and all the ghosts of literature wait for

him, starry-eyed, by the altar. And as long as there are Perfect Readers, who read with passion, with glory, and then speed to tell their friends, there will always be, ever and anon, a Perfect Writer.

And so, dear Perfect Reader, a Merry Christmas to you and a New Year of books worthy your devotion! When you revive from that book that holds you in spell, and find this little note on the cold hearth, I hope you may be pleased.

THE AUTOGENESIS OF A POET

THE mind trudges patiently behind the senses. Day by day a thousand oddities and charms outline themselves tenderly upon consciousness, but it may be long before understanding comes with brush and colour to fill in the tracery. One learns nothing until he rediscovers it for himself. Every now and then, in reading, I have come across something which has given me the wild surmise of pioneering mingled with the faint magic of familiarity—for instance, some of the famous dicta of Wordsworth and Coleridge and Shelley about poetry. I realized, then, that a teacher had told me these things in my freshman year at college—fifteen years ago. I jotted them down at that time, but they were mere catchwords. It had taken me fifteen years of vigorous living to overhaul those catchwords and fill them with a meaning of my own. The two teachers who first gave me some suspicion of what lies in the kingdom of poetry—who gave "so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it"—are both dead. May I mention their names?—Francis B. Gummere and

Albert Elmer Hancock, both of Haverford College. I cannot thank them as, now, I would like to. For I am (I think) approaching a stage where I can somewhat understand and relish the things of which they spoke. And I wonder afresh at the patience and charity of those who go on lecturing, unabated in zest, to boys of whom one in ten may perhaps, fifteen years later, begin to grasp their message.

In so far as any formal or systematic discipline of thought was concerned, I think I may say my education was a complete failure. For this I had only my own smattering and desultory habit of mind to blame and also a vivid troublesome sense of the beauty of it all. The charm of the prismatic fringe round the edges made juggling with the lens too tempting, and a clear persistent focus was never attained. Considered (oddly enough) by my mates as the pattern of a diligent scholar, I was in reality as idle as the idlest of them, which is saying much; though I confess that my dilettantism was not wholly disreputable. My mind excellently exhibited the Heraclitean doctrine: a constant flux of information passed through it, but nothing remained. Indeed, my senses were so continually crammed with new enchanting impressions, and every field of knowledge seemed so alluring, it was not strange I made little progress in any.

Perhaps it was unfortunate that both in America and in England I found myself in a college atmosphere of extraordinary pictorial charm. The Arcadian loveliness of the Haverford campus and the comfortable simplicity of its routine; and then the hypnotizing beauty and curiosity and subtle flavour of Oxford life (with its long, footloose, rambling vacations)—these were aptly devised for the exercise of the imagination, which is often a gracious phrase for loafing. But these surroundings were too richly entertaining, and I was too green and soft and humorous (in the Shakespearean sense) to permit any rational continuous plan of study. Like the young man to whom Coleridge addressed a poem of rebuke, I was abandoned, a greater part of the time, to "an Indolent and Causeless Melancholy"; or to its partner, an excessive and not always tasteful mirth. I spent hours upon hours, with little profit, in libraries, flitting aimlessly from book to book. With something between terror and hunger I contemplated the opposite sex. In short, I was discreditable and harmless and unlovely as the young Yahoo can be. It fills me with amazement to think that my preceptors must have seen, in that ill-conditioned creature, some shadow of human semblance, or how could they have been so uniformly kind?

Our education—such of it as is of durable im-

portance—comes haphazard. It is tinged by the enthusiasms of our teachers, gleaned by suggestions from our friends, prompted by glimpses and footnotes and margins. There was a time, I think, when I hung in tender equilibrium among various possibilities. I was enamoured of mathematics and physics: I went far enough in the latter to be appointed undergraduate assistant in the college laboratory. I had learned, by my junior year, exploring the charms of integral calculus, that there is no imaginable mental felicity more serenely pure than suspended happy absorption in a mathematical problem. Of course I attained no higher than the dregs of the subject; on that grovelling level I would still (in Billy Sunday's violent trope) have had to climb a tree to look a snake in the eye; but I could see that for the mathematician, if for any one, Time stands still withal; he is winnowed of vanity and sin. French, German, and Latin, and a hasty tincture of Xenophon and Homer (a mere lipwash of Helicon) gave me a zeal for philology and the tongues. I was a member in decent standing of the college classical club, and visions of life as a professor of languages seemed to me far from unhappy. A compulsory course in philosophy convinced me that there was still much to learn; and I had a delicious hallucination in which I saw myself compiling a volume of commentaries on the various

systems of this queen of sciences. "The Grammar of Agnostics," I think it was to be called: it would be written in a neat and comely hand on thousands of pages of pure white foolscap: I saw myself adding to it night by night, working *ohne Hast, ohne Rast.* And there were other careers, too, as statesman, philanthropist, diplomat, that I considered not beneath my horoscope. I spare myself the careful delineation of these projects, though they would be amusing enough.

But beneath these preoccupations another influence was working its inward way. My paramount interest had always been literary, though regarded as a gentle diversion, not degraded to a bread-and-butter concern. Ever since I had fallen under the superlative spell of R. L. S., in whom the cunning enchantment of the written word first became manifest, I had understood that books did not grow painlessly for our amusement, but were the issue of dexterous and intentional skill. I had thus made a stride from Conan Doyle, Cutcliffe Hyne, Anthony Hope, and other great loves of my earliest teens; those authors' delicious mysteries and picaresques I took for granted, not troubling over their method; but in Stevenson, even to a schoolboy the conscious artifice and nicety of phrase were puzzlingly apparent. A taste for literature, however, is a very different thing from a determination to undertake the art

in person as a means of livelihood. It takes brisk stimulus and powerful internal fevers to reduce a healthy youth to such a contemplation. All this is a long story, and I telescope it rigorously, thus setting the whole matter, perhaps, in a false proportion. But the central and operative factor is now at hand.

There was a certain classmate of mine (from Chicago) whose main devotion was to scientific and engineering studies. But since his plan embraced only two years at college before "going to work," he was (in the fashion traditionally ascribed to Chicago) speeding up the cultural knick-knacks of his education. So, in our freshman year, he was attending a course on "English Poets of the Nineteenth Century," which was, in the regular schedule of things, reserved for sophomores (supposedly riper for matters of feeling). Now I was living in a remote dormitory on the outskirts of the wide campus (that other Eden, demi-paradise, that happy breed of men, that little world!) some distance from the lecture halls and busy heart of college doings. It was the custom of those quartered in this colonial and sequestered outpost to make the room of some central classmate a base for the day, where books might be left between lectures, and so on. With the Chicagoan, whom we will call "J—," I had struck up a mild friend-

ship; mostly charitable on his part, I think, as he was from the beginning one of the most popular and influential men in the class, whereas I was one of the rabble. So it was, at any rate; and often in the evening, returning from library or dining hall on the way to my distant Bœotia, I would drop in at his room, in a lofty corner of old Barclay Hall, to pick up notebooks or anything else I might have left there.

What a pleasant place is a college dormitory at night! The rooms with their green-hooded lights and boyish similarity of decoration, the amiable buzz and stir of a game of cards under festoons of tobacco smoke, the wiry tinkle of a mandolin distantly heard, sudden clatter subsiding again into a general humming quiet, the happy sense of solitude in multitude, these are the partial ingredients of that feeling that no alumnus ever forgets. In his pensive citadel, my friend J—— would be sitting, with his pipe (one of those new "class pipes" with inlaid silver numerals, which appear among every college generation toward Christmas time of freshman year). In his lap would be the large green volume (*British Poets of the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Professor Curtis Hidden Page) which was the textbook of that sophomore course. He was reading Keats. And his eyes were those of one who has seen a new planet swim into his ken.

I don't know how many evenings we spent there

together. Probably only a few. I don't recall just how we communed, or imparted to one another our juvenile speculations. But I plainly remember how he would sit beside his desk-lamp and chuckle over the Ode to a Nightingale. He was a quizzical and quickly humorous creature, and Keats's beauties seemed to fill him not with melancholy or anguish, but with a delighted prostration of laughter. The "wormy circumstance" of the Pot of Basil, the Indian Maid nursing her luxurious sorrow, the congealing Beadsman and the palsied beldame Angela—these and a thousand quaintnesses of phrase moved him to a gush of glorious mirth. It was not that he did not appreciate the poet, but the unearthly strangeness of it all, the delicate contradiction of laws and behaviours known to freshmen, tickled his keen wits and emotions until they brimmed into puzzled laughter. "Away! Away!" he would cry—

> For I will fly to thee,
> Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
> But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
> Though the dull brain perplexes and retards—

and he would shout with merriment. Beaded bubbles winking at the brim; Throbbing throats' long, long melodious moan; Curious conscience burrowing like a mole; Emprison her soft hand and let her rave; Men slugs and human serpentry;

Bade her steep her hair in weird syrops; Poor weak palsy-stricken churchyard thing; Shut her pure sorrow-drops with glad exclaim—such lines were to him a constant and exhilarating excitement. In the very simplicity and unsophistication of his approach to the poet was a virgin naïveté of discernment that an Edinburgh Reviewer would rarely attain. Here, he dimly felt, was the great key

> To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,
> . . . aye, to all the mazy world
> Of silvery enchantment.

And in line after line of Endymion, as we pored over them together, he found the clear happiness of a magic that dissolved everything into lightness and freedom. It is agreeable to remember this man, preparing to be a building contractor, who loved Keats because he made him laugh. I wonder if the critics have not too insistently persuaded us to read our poet in a black-edged mood? After all, his nickname was "Junkets."

So it was that I first, in any transcending sense, fell under the empire of a poet. Here was an endless fountain of immortal drink: here was a history potent to send a young mind from its bodily tenement. The pleasure was too personal to be completely shared; for the most part J—— and I read not together, but each by each, he sitting in his

morris chair by the desk, I sprawled upon his couch, reading, very likely, different poems, but communicating, now and then, a sudden discovery. Probably I exaggerate the subtlety of our enjoyment, for it is hard to review the unself-scrutinizing moods of freshmanhood. It would be hard, too, to say which enthusiast had the greater enjoyment: he, because these glimpses through magic casements made him merry; I, because they made me sad. Outside, the snow sparkled in the pure winter night; the long lance windows of the college library shone yellow-panelled through the darkness, and there would be the occasional interruption of light-hearted classmates. How perfectly it all chimed into the mood of St. Agnes' Eve! The opening door would bring a gust of lively sound from down the corridor, a swelling jingle of music, shouts from some humorous "rough-house" (probably those sophomores on the floor below)—

> The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion
> The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet
> Affray his ears, though but in dying tone—
> The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

It did not take very long for J—— to work through the fifty pages of Keats reprinted in Professor Hidden Page's anthology; and then he, a lone and laughing faun among that pack of stern sophomores—so flewed, so sanded, out of the

Spartan kind, crook-knee'd and dewlapped like Thessalian bulls—sped away into thickets of Landor, Tennyson, the Brownings. There I, an unprivileged and unsuspected hanger-on, lost their trail, returning to my own affairs. For some reason—I don't know just why—I never "took" that course in Nineteenth Century Poets, in the classroom at any rate. But just as Mr. Chesterton, in his glorious little book, *The Victorian Age in Literature* asserts that the most important event in English history was the event that never happened at all (you yourself may look up his explanation) so perhaps the college course that meant most to me was the one I never attended. What it meant to those sophomores of the class of 1909 is another gentle speculation. Three years later, when I was a senior, and those sophomores had left college, another youth and myself were idly prowling about a dormitory corridor where some of those same sophomores had previously lodged. An unsuspected cupboard appeared to us, and rummaging in it we found a pile of books left there, forgotten, by a member of that class. It was a Saturday afternoon, and my companion and I had been wondering how we could raise enough cash to go to town for dinner and a little harmless revel. To shove those books into a suitcase and hasten to Philadelphia by trolley was the obvious caper; and Leary's famous old book-

store ransomed the volumes for enough money to provide an excellent dinner at Lauber's, where, in those days, the thirty-cent bottle of sour claret was considered the true, the blushful Hippocrene. But among the volumes was a copy of Professor Page's anthology which had been used by one of J——'s companions in that poetry course. This seemed to me too precious to part with, so I retained it; still have it; and have occasionally studied the former owner's marginal memoranda. At the head of The Eve of St. Agnes he wrote: "Middle Ages. N. Italy. Guelph, Guibilline." At the beginning of Endymion he recorded: "Keats tries to be spiritualized by love for celestials." Against Sleep and Poetry: "Desultory. Genius in the larval state." The Ode on a Grecian Urn, he noted: "Crystallized philosophy of idealism. Embalmed anticipation." The Ode on Melancholy: "Non-Gothic. Not of intellect or disease. Emotions."

Darkling I listen to these faint echoes from a vanished lecture room, and ponder. Did J—— keep his copy of the book, I wonder, and did he annotate it with lively commentary of his own? He left college at the end of our second year, and I have not seen or heard from him these thirteen years. The last I knew—six years ago—he was a contractor in an Ohio city; and (is this not significant?) in a letter written then to another

classmate, recalling some waggishness of our own sophomore days, he used the phrase "Like Ruth among the alien corn."

In so far as one may see turning points in a tangle of yarn, or count dewdrops on a morning cobweb, I may say that a few evenings with my friend J—— were the decisive vibration that moved one more minor poet toward the privilege and penalty of Parnassus. One cannot nicely decipher such fragile causes and effects. It was a year later before the matter became serious enough to enforce abandoning library copies of Keats and buying an edition of my own. And this, too, may have been not unconnected with the gracious influence of the other sex as exhibited in a neighbouring athenæum; and was accompanied by a gruesome spate of florid lyrics: some (happily) secret, and some exposed with needless hardihood in a college magazine. The world, which has looked leniently upon many poetical minorities, regards such frenzies with tolerant charity and forgetfulness. But the wretch concerned may be pardoned for looking back in a mood of lingering enlargement. As Sir Philip Sidney put it, "Self-love is better than any gilding to make that seem gorgeous wherein ourselves be parties."

There is a vast deal of nonsense written and uttered about poetry. In an age when verses are

more noisily and fluently circulated than ever before, it might seem absurd to plead in the Muse's defence. Yet poetry and the things poets love are pitifully weak to-day. In essence, poetry is the love of life—not mere brutish tenacity of sensation, but a passion for all the honesties that make life free and generous and clean. For two thousand years poets have mocked and taunted the cruelties and follies of men, but to what purpose? Wordsworth said: "In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs, in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed, the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time." Sometimes it seems as though "things violently destroyed," and the people who destroy them, are too strong for the poets. Where, now, do we see any cohesive binding together of humanity? Are we nearer these things than when Wordsworth and Coleridge walked and talked on the Quantock Hills or on that immortal road "between Porlock and Linton"? Hardy writes *The Dynasts*, Joseph Conrad writes his great preface to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus,"* but do the destroyers hear them? Have you read again, since the War, Gulliver's *Voyage to the Houyhnhnms*, or Herman Melville's *Moby Dick?* These men wrote, whether in verse or prose, in

the true spirit of poets; and Swift's satire, which the textbook writers all tell you is so gross and savage as to suggest the author's approaching madness, seems tender and suave by comparison with what we know to-day.

Poetry is the log of man's fugitive castaway soul upon a doomed and derelict planet. The minds of all men plod the same rough roads of sense; and in spite of much knavery, all win at times "an ampler ether, a diviner air." The great poets, our masters, speak out of that clean freshness of perception. We hear their voices—

I there before thee, in the country that well thou knowest,
Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air.

So it is not vain, perhaps, to try clumsily to tell how this delicious uneasiness first captured the spirit of one who, if not a poet, is at least a lover of poetry. Thus he first looked beyond the sunset; stood, if not on Parnassus, tiptoe upon a little hill. And overhead a great wind was blowing.

IN MEMORIAM
FRANCIS BARTON GUMMERE

I OFTEN wonder what inward pangs of laughter or despair he may have felt as he sat behind the old desk in Chase Hall and watched us file in, year after year! Callow, juvenile, ignorant, and cocksure—grotesquely confident of our own manly fulness of worldly *savoir*—an absurd rabble of youths, miserable flintheads indeed for such a steel! We were the most unpromising of all material for the scholar's eye; comfortable, untroubled middle-class lads most of us, to whom study was neither a privilege nor a passion, but only a sober and decent way of growing old enough to enter business.

We did not realize how accurately—and perhaps a trifle grimly—the strong, friendly face behind the desk was searching us and sizing us up. He knew us for what we were—a group of nice boys, too sleek, too cheerfully secure, to show the ambition of the true student. There was among us no specimen of the lean and dogged crusader of learning that kindles the eye of the master:

no fanatical Scot, such as rejoices the Oxford or Cambridge don; no liquid-orbed and hawk-faced Hebrew with flushed cheek bones, such as sets the pace in the class-rooms of our large universities. No: we were a hopelessly mediocre, well-fed, satisfied, and characteristically Quakerish lot. As far as the battle for learning goes, we were pacifists—conscientious objectors.

It is doubtful whether any really great scholar ever gave the best years of his life to so meagrely equipped a succession of youngsters! I say this candidly, and it is well it should be said, for it makes apparent the true genius of Doctor Gummere's great gift. He turned this following of humble plodders into lovers and zealots of the great regions of English letters. There was something knightly about him—he, the great scholar, who would never stoop to scoff at the humblest of us. It might have been thought that his shining gifts were wasted in a small country college, where not one in fifty of his pupils could follow him into the enchanted lands of the imagination where he was fancy-free. But it was not so. One may meet man after man, old pupils of his, who have gone on into the homely drudging rounds of business, the law, journalism—men whose faces will light up with affection and remembrance when Doctor Gummere's name is mentioned. We may have forgotten much of our Chaucer, our Milton, our

Ballads—though I am sure we have none of us forgotten the deep and thrilling vivacity of his voice reciting:

O where hae ye been, Lord Randal, my son?
O where hae ye been, my handsome young man?
I hae been to the wild wood; mither, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi' hunting and fain wald lie doun.

But what we learned from him lay in the very charm of his personality. It was a spell that no one in his classroom could escape. It shone from his sparkling eye; it spoke in his irresistible humour; it moved in every line of that well-loved face, in his characteristic gesture of leaning forward and tilting his head a little to one side as he listened, patiently, to whatever juvenile surmises we stammered to express. It was the true learning of which his favourite Sir Philip Sidney said:

> This purifying of wit, this enriching of memory, enabling of judgment, and enlarging of conceit, which commonly we call learning, under what name soever it come forth or to what immediate end soever it be directed, the final end is to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clay lodgings, can be capable of.

Indeed, just to listen to him was a purifying of wit, an enriching of memory, an enabling of judgment, an enlarging of imagination. He gave us "so

sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it."

He moved among all human contacts with unerring grace. He was never the teacher, always the comrade. It was his way to pretend that we knew far more than we did; so with perfect courtesy and gravity, he would ask our opinion on some matter of which we knew next to nothing; and we knew it was only his exquisiteness of good manners that impelled the habit; and we knew he knew the laughableness of it; yet we adored him for it. He always suited his strength to our weakness; would tell us things almost with an air of apology for seeming to know more than we; pretending that we doubtless had known it all along, but it had just slipped our memory. Marvellously he set us on our secret honour to do justice to this rare courtesy. To fail him in some task he had set became, in our boyish minds, the one thing most abhorrent in dealing with such a man—a discourtesy. He was a man of the rarest and most delicate breeding, the finest and truest gentleman we had known. Had he been nothing else, how much we would have learnt from that alone.

What a range, what a grasp, there was in his glowing, various mind! How open it was on all sides, how it teemed with interests, how different from the scholar of silly traditional belief! We used to believe that he could have taught us his-

tory, science, economics, philosophy—almost anything; and so indeed he did. He taught us to go adventuring among masterpieces on our own account, which is the most any teacher can do. Luckiest of all were those who, on one pretext or another, found their way to his fireside of an evening. To sit entranced, smoking one of his cigars,* to hear him talk of Stevenson, Meredith, or Hardy —(his favourites among the moderns) to marvel anew at the infinite scope and vivacity of his learning—this was to live on the very doorsill of enchantment. Homeward we would go, crunching across the snow where Barclay crowns the slope with her evening blaze of lights, one glimpse nearer some realization of the magical colours and tissues of the human mind, the rich perplexity and many-sided glamour of life.

It is strange (as one reviews all the memories of that good friend and master) to think that there is now a new generation beginning at Haverford that will never know his spell. There is a heavy debt on his old pupils. He made life so much richer and more interesting for us. Even if we never explored for ourselves the fields of literature toward which he pointed, his radiant individuality

*It was characteristic of him that he usually smoked *Robin Hood*, that admirable 5-cent cigar, because the name, and the picture of an outlaw on the band, reminded him of the Fourteenth Century Ballads he knew by heart.

remains in our hearts as a true exemplar of what scholarship can mean. We can never tell all that he meant to us. Gropingly we turn to little pictures in memory. We see him crossing Cope Field in the green and gold of spring mornings, on his way to class. We see him sitting on the veranda steps of his home on sunny afternoons, full of gay and eager talk on a thousand diverse topics. He little knew, I think, how we hung upon his words. I can think of no more genuine tribute than this: that in my own class—which was a notoriously cynical and scoffish band of young sophisters—when any question of religious doubt or dogma arose for discussion among some midnight group, someone was sure to say, "I wish I knew what Doctor Gummere thought about it!" We felt instinctively that what he thought would have been convincing enough for us.

He was a truly great man. A greater man than we deserved, and there is a heavy burden upon us to justify the life that he gave to our little college. He has passed into the quiet and lovely tradition that surrounds and nourishes that place we all love so well. Little by little she grows, drawing strength and beauty from human lives around her, confirming herself in honour and remembrance. The teacher is justified by his scholars. Doctor Gummere might have gone elsewhere, surrounded by a greater and more ambitiously docu-

mented band of pupils. He whom we knew as the greatest man we had ever seen, moved little outside the world of learning. He gave himself to us, and we are the custodians of his memory.

Every man who loved our vanished friend must know with what realization of shamed incapacity one lays down the tributary pen. He was so strong, so full of laughter and grace, so truly a man, his long vacation still seems a dream, and we feel that somewhere on the well-beloved campus we shall meet him and feel that friendly hand. In thinking of him I am always reminded of that fine old poem of Sir Henry Wotton, a teacher himself, the provost of Eton, whose life has been so charmingly written by another Haverfordian—(Logan Pearsall Smith).

THE CHARACTER OF A HAPPY LIFE

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill!

Whose passions not his masters are;
Whose soul is still prepared for death
Not tied unto the world by care
Of public fame or private breath;

Who envies none that chance doth raise,
Nor vice; who never understood
How deepest wounds are given by praise;
Nor rules of state, but rules of good;

Who hath his life from rumours freed;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great;

Who God doth late and early pray
More of His grace than gifts to lend;
And entertains the harmless day
With a well-chosen book or friend;

This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise or fear to fall:
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath all.

Such was the Happy Man as Sir Henry Wotton described him. Such, I think, was the life of our friend. I think it must have been a happy life, for he gave so much happiness to others.

CREED OF THE THREE HOURS FOR LUNCH CLUB

IT HAS been suggested that the Three Hours for Lunch Club is an immoral institution; that it is founded upon an insufficient respect for the devotions of industry; that it runs counter to the form and pressure of the age; that it encourages a greedy and rambling humour in the young of both sexes; that it even punctures, in the bosoms of settled merchants and rotarians, that capsule of efficiency and determination by which Great Matters are Put Over. It has been said, in short, that the Three Hours for Lunch Club should be more clandestine and reticent about its truancies.

Accordingly, it seems good to us to testify concerning Lunches and the philosophy of Lunching.

There are Lunches of many kinds. The Club has been privileged to attend gatherings of considerable lustre; occasions when dishes of richness and curiosity were dissected; when the surroundings were not devoid of glamour and surreptitious pomp. The Club has been convened in many different places: in resorts of pride and in low-ceiled

reeky taphouses; in hotels where those clear cubes of unprofitable ice knock tinklingly in the goblets; in the brightly tinted cellars of Greenwich Village; in the saloons of ships. But the Club would give a false impression of its mind and heart if it allowed any one to suppose that Food is the chief object of its quest. It is true that Man, bitterly examined, is merely a vehicle for units of nourishing combustion; but on those occasions when the Club feels most truly Itself it rises above such considerations.

The form and pressure of the time (to repeat Hamlet's phrase) is such that thoughtful men—and of such the Club is exclusively composed: men of great heart, men of nice susceptibility—are continually oppressed by the fumbling, hasty, and insignificant manner in which human contacts are accomplished. Let us even say, *masculine* contacts: for the first task of any philosopher being to simplify his problem so that he can examine it clearly and with less distraction, the Club makes a great and drastic purge by sweeping away altogether the enigmatic and frivolous sex and disregarding it, at any rate during the hours of convivial session. The Club is troubled to note that in the intolerable rabies and confusion of this business life men meet merely in a kind of convulsion or horrid passion of haste and perplexity. We see, ever and often, those in whose faces we discern delightful and considerable secrets, mes-

sages of just import, grotesque mirth, or improving sadness. In their bearing and gesture, even in hours of haste and irritation, the Club (with its trained and observant eye) notes the secret and rare sign of Thought. Such men are marked by an inexorable follow-up system. Sooner or later their telephones ring; secretaries and go-betweens are brushed aside; they are bidden to appear at such and such a time and place; no excuses are accepted. Then follow the Consolations of Intercourse. Conducted with "shattering candour" (as one has said who is in spirit a member of this Club, though not yet, alas, inducted), the meetings may sometimes resolve themselves into a ribaldry, sometimes into a truthful pursuit of Beauty, sometimes into a mere logomachy. But in these symposiums, unmarred by the crude claim of duty, the Club does with single-minded resolve pursue the only lasting satisfaction allowed to humanity, to wit, the sympathetic study of other men's minds.

This is clumsily said: but we have seen moments when eager and honourable faces round the board explained to us what we mean. There is but one indefeasible duty of man, to say out the truth that is in his heart. The way of life engendered by a great city and a modern civilization makes it hard to do so. It is the function of the Club to say to the City and to Life Itself: "Stand back! Fair play! We see a goodly matter inditing

in our friend's spirit. We will take our ease and find out what it is."

For this life of ours (asserts the Club) is curiously compounded of Beauty and Dross. You ascend the Woolworth Building, let us say—one of man's noblest and most poetic achievements. And at the top, what do you find, just before going out upon that gallery to spread your eye upon man's reticulated concerns? Do you find a little temple or cloister for meditation, or any way of marking in your mind the beauty and significance of the place? No, a man in uniform will thrust into your hand a booklet of well-intentioned description (but of unapproachable typographic ugliness) and you will find before you a stall for the sale of cheap souvenirs, ash trays, and hideous postcards. In such ways do things of Beauty pass into the custody of those unequipped to understand them.

The Club thinks that the life of this city, brutally intense and bewildering, has yet a beauty and glamour and a secret word to the mind, so subtle that it cannot be closely phrased, but so important that to miss it is to miss life itself. And to forfeit an attempt to see, understand, and mutually communicate this loveliness is to forfeit that burning spark that makes men's spirits worth while. To such halting meditations the Club devotes its aspirations undistressed by humorous protest. If this be treason . . .!

A PREFACE TO THE PROFESSION OF JOURNALISM

(BEING AN ANSWER TO A LETTER FROM A COLLEGE STUDENT, ASKING ADVICE AS TO TAKING UP WRITING AS A CAREER)

YOUR inquiry is congenial, and I feel guilty of selfishness in answering it in this way. But he must be a poor workman, whether artisan or artist, who does not welcome an excuse now and then for shutting out the fascinating and maddening complexity of this shining world to concentrate his random wits on some honest and self-stimulating expression of his purpose.

There are exceptions to every rule; but writing, if undertaken as a trade, is subject to the conditions of all other trades. The apprentice must begin with task-work; he must please his employers before he can earn the right to please himself. Not only that, he must have ingenuity and patience enough to learn *how* editors are pleased; but he will be startled, I think, if he studies their needs, to see how eager they are to meet him half

way. This necessary docility is in the long run, a wholesome physic, because, if our apprentice has any gallantry of spirit, it will arouse in him an exhilarating irritation, that indignation which is said to be the forerunner of creation. It will mean, probably, a period—perhaps short, perhaps long, perhaps permanent—of rather meagre and stinted acquaintance with the genial luxuries and amenities of life; but (such is the optimism of memory) a period that he will always look back upon as the happiest of all. It is well for our apprentice if, in this season, he has a taste for cheap tobacco and a tactful technique in borrowing money.

The deliberate embrace of literature as a career involves very real dangers. I mean dangers to the spirit over and above those of the right-hand trouser pocket. For, let it be honestly stated, the business of writing is solidly founded on a monstrous and perilous egotism. Himself, his temperament, his powers of observation and comment, his emotions and sensibilities and ambitions and idiocies—these are the only monopoly the writer has. This is his only capital, and with glorious and shameless confidence he proposes to market it. Let him make the best of it. Continually stooping over the muddy flux of his racing mind, searching a momentary flash of clearness in which he can find mirrored some delicate beauty or truth, he tosses between the alternatives of self-grandeur and

self-disgust. It is a painful matter, this endless self-scrutiny. We are all familiar with the addled ego of literature—the writer whom constant self-communion has made vulgar, acid, querulous, and vain. And yet it is remarkable that of so many who meddle with the combustible passions of their own minds so few are blown up. The discipline of living is a fine cooling jacket for the engine.

It is essential for our apprentice to remember that, though he begin with the vilest hack-work—writing scoffing paragraphs, or advertising pamphlets, or free-lance snippets for the papers—that even in hack-work quality shows itself to those competent to judge; and he need not always subdue his gold to the lead in which he works. Moreover, conscience and instinct are surprisingly true and sane. If he follows the suggestions of his own inward, he will generally be right. Moreover again, no one can help him as much as he can help himself. There is no job in the writing world that he cannot have if he really wants it. Writing about something he intimately knows is a sound principle. Hugh Walpole, that greatly gifted novelist, taught school after leaving Cambridge, and very sensibly began by writing about school teaching. If you care to see how well he did it, read *The Gods and Mr. Perrin*. I would propose this test to the would-be writer: Does he feel, honestly, that he

could write as convincingly about his own tract of life (whatever it may be) as Walpole wrote about that boys' school? If so, he has a true vocation for literature.

The first and most necessary equipment of any writer, be he reporter, advertising copy-man, poet, or historian, is swift, lively, accurate observation. And since consciousness is a rapid, shallow river which we can only rarely dam up deep enough to go swimming and take our ease, it is his positive need (unless he is a genius who can afford to let drift away much of his only source of gold) to keep a notebook handy for the sieving and skimming of this running stream. Samuel Butler has good advice on this topic. Of ideas, he says, you must throw salt on their tails or they fly away and you never see their bright plumage again. Poems, stories, epigrams, all the happiest freaks of the mind, flit by on wings and at haphazard instants. They must be caught in air. In this respect one thinks American writers ought to have an advantage over English, for American trousers are made with hip-pockets, in which a small notebook may so comfortably caress the natural curvature of man.

Fancy is engendered in the eyes, said Shakespeare, and is with gazing fed. By fancy he meant (I suppose) love; but imagination is also so engendered. Close, constant, vivid and compassion-

ate gazing at the ways of mankind is the laboratory manual of literature. But for most of us we may gaze until our eyeballs twitch with weariness; unless we seize and hold the flying picture in some steadfast memorandum, the greater part of our experience dissolves away with time. If a man has thought sufficiently about the arduous and variously rewarded profession of literature to propose seriously to follow it for a living, he will already have said these things to himself, with more force and pungency. He may have satisfied himself that he has a necessary desire for "self-expression," which is a parlous state indeed, and the cause of much literary villainy. The truly great writer is more likely to write in the hope of expressing the hearts of others than his own. And there are other desires, too, most legitimate, that he may feel. An English humorist said recently in the preface to his book: "I wrote these stories to satisfy an inward craving—not for artistic expression, but for food and drink." But I cannot conscientiously advise any man to turn to writing merely as a means of earning his victual unless he should, by some cheerful casualty, stumble upon a trick of the You-know-me-Alfred sort, what one might call the Attabuoyant style. If all you want is a suggestion as to some honest way of growing rich, the doughnut industry is not yet overcrowded; and people will stand in line to pay twenty-two

cents for a dab of ice-cream smeared with a trickle of syrup.

To the man who approaches writing with some decent tincture of idealism it is well to say that he proposes to use as a trade what is, at its best and happiest, an art and a recreation. He proposes to sell his mental reactions to the helpless public, and he proposes not only to enjoy himself by so doing, but to be handsomely recompensed withal. He cannot complain that in days when both honesty and delicacy of mind are none too common we ask him to bring to his task the humility of the tradesman, the joy of the sportsman, the conscience of the artist.

And if he does so, he will be in a condition to profit by these fine words of George Santayana, said of the poet, but applicable to workers in every branch of literature:

> He labours with his nameless burden of perception, and wastes himself in aimless impulses of emotion and reverie, until finally the method of some art offers a vent to his inspiration, or to such part of it as can survive the test of time and the discipline of expression. . . . Wealth of sensation and freedom of fancy, which make an extraordinary ferment in his ignorant heart, presently bubble over into some kind of utterance.

THE CLUB OF ABANDONED HUSBANDS

AJAX: Hullo, Socrates, what are you doing patrolling the streets at this late hour? Surely it would be more seemly to be at home?

SOCRATES: You speak sooth, Ajax, but I have no home to repair to.

AJAX: What do you mean by that?

SOCRATES: In the sense of a place of habitation, a dormitory, of course I still have a home; but it is merely an abandoned shell, a dark and silent place devoid of allure. I have sent my family to the seashore, good Ajax, and the lonely apartment, with all the blinds pulled down and nothing in the ice box, is a dismal haunt. That is why I wander upon the highway.

AJAX: I, too, have known that condition, Socrates. Two years ago Cassandra took the children to the mountains for July and August; and upon my word I had a doleful time of it. What do you say, shall we have recourse to a beaker of ginger ale and discuss this matter? It is still only the shank of the evening.

SOCRATES: It is well thought of.

AJAX: As I was saying, the quaint part of it was that before my wife left I had secretly thought that a period of bachelorhood would be an interesting change. I rather liked the idea of strolling about in the evenings, observing the pageant of human nature in my quiet way, dropping in at the club or the library, and mingling with my fellow men in a fashion that the husband and father does not often have opportunity to do.

SOCRATES: And when Cassandra went away you found yourself desolate?

AJAX: Even so. Of course matters were rather different in those days, before the archons had taken away certain stimulants, but the principle is still the same. You know, the inconsistency of man is rather entertaining. I had often complained about having to help put the children to bed when I got home from the office. I grudged the time it took to get them all safely bestowed. And then, when the children were away, I found myself spending infinitely more time and trouble in getting some of my bachelor friends to bed.

SOCRATES: As that merry cartoonist Briggs observes in some of his frescoes, Oh Man!

AJAX: I wonder if your experience is the same as mine was? I found that about six o'clock in the evening, the hour when I would normally have been hastening home to wife and babes, was the most

poignant time. I was horribly homesick. If I did go back to my forlorn apartment, the mere sight of little Priam's crib was enough to reduce me to tears. I seriously thought of writing a poem about it.

SOCRATES: What is needed is a Club of Abandoned Husbands, for the consolation of those whose families are out of town.

AJAX: I have never found a club of much assistance at such a time. It is always full of rather elderly men who talk a great deal and in a manner both doleful and ill-informed.

SOCRATES: But this would be a club of quite a different sort. It would be devised to offer a truly domestic atmosphere to those who have sent their wives and juveniles to the country for the benefit of the fresh air, and have to stay in the city themselves to earn what is vulgarly known as kale.

AJAX: How would you work out the plan?

SOCRATES: It would not be difficult. In the first place, there would be a large nursery, with a number of rented children of various ages. Each member of the club, hastening thither from his office at the conclusion of the day's work, would be privileged to pick out some child as nearly as possible similar in age and sex to his own absent offspring. He would then deal with this child according to the necessities of its condition. If it were an extremely young infant, a bottle prop-

erly prepared would be ready in the club kitchen, and he could administer it. The club bathroom would be filled with hilarious members on their knees beside small tubs, bathing such urchins as needed it. Others would be playing games on the floor, or tucking the children in bed. It ought to be quite feasible to hire a number of children for this purpose. During the day they would be cared for by a competent matron. Baby carriages would be provided, and if any of the club members were compelled to remain in town over the week-end they could take the children for an airing in the park.

AJAX: This is a brave idea, Socrates. And then, when all the children were bedded for the night, how would the domestic atmosphere be simulated?

SOCRATES: Nothing simpler. After dinner such husbands as are accustomed to washing the dishes would be allowed to do so in the club kitchen. During the day it would be the function of the matron to think up a number of odd jobs to be performed in the course of the evening. Pictures would be hung, clocks wound, a number of tin cans would be waiting to be opened with refractory can openers, and there would always be several window blinds that had gone wrong. A really resourceful matron could devise any number of ways of making the club seem just like home. One

night she would discern a smell of gas, the next there might be a hole in the fly-screens, or a little carpentering to do, or a caster broken under the piano. Husbands with a turn for plumbing would find the club basement a perpetual place of solace, with a fresh leak or a rumbling pipe every few days.

AJAX: Admirable! And if the matron really wanted to make the members feel at home she would take a turn through the building every now and then, to issue a gentle rebuke for cigar ashes dropped on the rugs or feet elevated on chairs.

SOCRATES: The really crowning touch, I think, would lie in the ice-box raids. A large ice box would be kept well stocked with remainders of apple pie, macaroni, stewed prunes, and chocolate pudding. Any husband, making a cautious inroad upon these about midnight, would surely have the authentic emotion of being in his own home.

AJAX: An occasional request to empty the ice-box pan would also be an artful echo of domesticity.

SOCRATES: Of course the success of the scheme would depend greatly on finding the right person for matron. If she were to strew a few hairpins about and perhaps misplace a latchkey now and then——

AJAX: Socrates, you have hit upon a great idea. But you ought to extend the membership of the club to include young men not yet married. Think

what an admirable training school for husbands it would make!

SOCRATES: My dear fellow, let us not discuss it any further. It makes me too homesick. I am going back to my lonely apartment to write a letter to dear Xanthippe.

GOING TO PHILADELPHIA

YOU never know when an adventure is going to begin. But on a train is a good place to lie in wait for them. So we sat down in the smoker of the 10 A. M. Eastern Standard Time P. R. R. express to Philadelphia, in a receptive mood.

At Manhattan Transfer the brakeman went through the train, crying in a loud, clear, emphatic barytone: "Next stop for this train is North Philadelphia!"

We sat comfortably, and in that mood of secretly exhilarated mental activity which is induced by riding on a fast train. We were looking over the June *Atlantic*. We smiled gently to ourself at that unconscious breath of New England hauteur expressed in the publisher's announcement, "*The edition of the Atlantic is carefully restricted.*" Then, meditating also on the admirable sense and skill with which the magazine is edited, and getting deep into William Archer's magnificent article "The Great Stupidity" (which we hope all our clients will read) we became aware of outcries of anguish and suffering in the aisle near by.

At Manhattan Transfer a stout little man with a fine domy forehead and a derby hat tilted rather far aft had entered the smoker. He suddenly learned that the train did not stop at Newark. He uttered lamentation, and attacked the brakeman with grievous protest. "I heard you say, 'This train stops at Newark and Philadelphia,'" he insisted. His cigar revolved wildly in the corner of his mouth; crystal beads burst out upon the opulent curve of his forehead. "I've got to meet a man in Newark and sell him a bill of goods."

The brakeman was gentle but firm. "Here's the conductor," he said. "You'll have to talk to him."

Now this is a tribute of admiration and respect to that conductor. He came along the aisle punching tickets, holding his record slip gracefully folded round the middle finger of his punch hand, as conductors do. Like all experienced conductors he was alert, watchful, ready for any kind of human guile and stupidity, but courteous the while. The man bound for Newark ran to him and began his harangue. The frustrated merchant was angry and felt himself a man with a grievance. His voice rose in shrill tones, he waved his hands.

Then began a scene that was delightful to watch. The conductor was magnificently tactful. He ought to have been an ambassador (in fact, he reminded us of one ambassador, for his trim and slender figure, his tawny, drooping moustache,

the gentle and serene tact of his bearing, were very like Mr. Henry van Dyke). He allowed the protestant to exhaust himself with reproaches, and then he began an affectionate little sermon, tender, sympathetic, but firm.

"I thought this train stopped at Newark," the fat man kept on saying.

"You mustn't think, you must *know*," said the conductor, gazing shrewdly at him above the rims of his demi-lune spectacles. "Now, why did you get on a train without making sure where it stopped? You heard the brakeman say: 'Newark and Philadelphia'? No; he said 'North Philadelphia.' Yes, I know you were in a hurry, but that wasn't our fault, was it? Now, let me tell you something: I've been working for this company for twenty-five years. . . ."

Unhappily the noise of the train prevented us from hearing the remark that followed. We were remembering a Chinese translation that we made once. It went something like this:

A SUSPICIOUS NATURE

Whenever I travel
I ask at least three train-men
If this is the right train
For where I am going,
Even then
I hardly believe them.

But as we watched the two, the conductor gently convincing the irate passenger that he would have to abide by his mistake, and the truculent fat man gradually realizing that he was hopelessly in the wrong, a new aspect subtly came over the dialogue. We saw the stout man wither and droop. We thought he was going to die. His hat slid farther and farther upward on his dewy brow. His hands fluttered. His cigar, grievously chewed, trembled in its corner of his mouth. His fine dark eyes filled with tears.

The conductor, you see, was explaining that he would have to pay the fare to North Philadelphia and then take the first train back from there to Newark.

We feared, for a few minutes, that it really would be a case for a chirurgeon, with cupping and leeching and smelling salts. Our rotund friend was in a bad way. His heart, plainly, was broken. From his right-hand trouser emerged a green roll. With delicate speed and tact the conductor hastened this tragic part of the performance. His silver punch flashed in his hand as he made change, issued a cash slip, and noted the name and address of the victim, for some possible future restitution, we surmised, or perhaps only as a generous anæsthetic.

The stout man sat down a few seats in front of us and we studied his back. We have never seen a

more convincing display of chagrin. With a sombre introspective stare he gazed glassily before him. We never saw any one show less enthusiasm for the scenery. The train flashed busily along through the level green meadows, which blended exactly with the green plush of the seats, but our friend was lost in a gruesome trance. Even his cigar (long since gone out) was still, save for an occasional quiver.

The conductor came to our seat, looking, douce man, faintly stern and sad, like a good parent who has had, regretfully, to chastise an erring urchin.

"Well," we said, "the next time that chap gets on a train he'll take care to find out where it stops."

The conductor smiled, but a humane, understanding smile. "I try to be fair with 'em," he said.

"I think you were a wonder," we said.

By the time we reached North Philadelphia the soothing hand of Time had exerted some of its consolation. The stout man wore a faintly sheepish smile as he rose to escape. The brakeman was in the vestibule. He, younger than the conductor, was no less kind, but we would hazard that he is not quite as resigned to mortal error and distress. He spoke genially, but there was a note of honest rebuke in his farewell.

The next time you get on a train," he said, "watch your stop."

THE RUDENESS OF POETS

THE poet who has not learned how to be rude has not learned his first duty to himself. By "poet" I mean, of course, any imaginative creator—novelist, mathematician, editor, or a man like Herbert Hoover. And by "rude" I mean the strict and definite limitation which, sooner or later, he must impose upon his sociable instincts. He must refuse to fritter away priceless time and energy in the random genialities of the world. Friendly, well-meaning, and fumbling hands will stretch out to bind the poet's heart in the maddening pack-thread of Lilliput. It will always be so. Life, for most, is so empty of consecrated purpose, so full of palaver, that they cannot understand the trouble of one who carries a flame in his heart, and whose salvation depends on his strength to nourish that flame unsuffocated by crowding and scrutiny.

The poet lives in an alien world. That is not his pride; it is his humility. It is often his joy, but often also his misery: he must dree his weird. His necessary solitude of spirit is not luxury, nor the

gesture of a churl: it is his sacrifice, it is the condition on which he lives. He must be content to seem boorish to the general in order to be tender to his duty. He has invisible guests at the table of his heart: those places are reserved against all comers. He must be their host first of all, or he is damned. He serves the world by cutting it when they meet inopportunely. There are times (as Keats said and Christ implied) when the wind and the stars are his wife and children.

There will be a thousand pressures to bare his bosom to the lunacy of public dinners, lecture platforms, and what not pleasant folderol. He must be privileged apparent ruffian discourtesy. He has his own heartburn to consider. One thinks of Rudyard Kipling in this connection. Mr. Kipling stands above all other men of letters to-day in the brave clearness with which he has made it plain that he consorts first of all with his own imagination.

As the poet sees the world, and studies, the more he realizes that men are sharply cut in two classes: those who understand, those who do not. With the latter he speaks a foreign language and with effort, trying shamefacedly to conceal his strangeness. With these, perhaps, every moment spent is for ever lost. With the others he can never commune enough, seeking clumsily to share and impart those moments of rare intuition when truth

came near. There is rarely any doubt as to this human division: the heart knows its kin.

The world, as he sees it around him, is almost unconscious of its unspeakable loveliness and mystery; and it is largely regimented and organized for absurdity. The greater part of the movement he sees is (by his standard) not merely stupid (which is pardonable and appealing), but meaningless altogether. He views it between anger and tenderness. Where there might have been the exquisite and delicious simplicity of a Japanese print, he sees the flicker and cruel garishness of a speeding film. And so, for refreshment, he crosses through the invisible doorway into his own dear land of lucidity. He cons over that passport of his unsociability, words of J. B. Yeats which should be unforgotten in every poet's mind:

> Poetry is the voice of the solitary man. The poet is always a solitary; and yet he speaks to others—he would win their attention. Thus it follows that every poem is a social act done by a solitary man. And being an alien from the strange land of the solitary, he cannot be expected to admonish or to sermonize, or uplift, as it is called; and so take part in the cabals and intrigues in other lands of which he knows nothing, being himself a stranger from a strange land, the land of the solitary. People listen to him as they would to any other traveller come from distant countries, and all he asks for is courtesy even as he himself is courteous.

Inferior poets are those who forget their dignity—and, indeed, their only chance of being permitted to live—and to make friends try to enter into the lives of the people whom they would propitiate, and so become teachers and moralists and preachers. And soon for penalty of their rashness and folly they forget their own land of the solitary, and its speech perishes from their lips. The traveller's tales are of all the most precious, because he comes from a land—the poet's solitude—which no other feet have trodden and which no other feet will tread.

So, briefly and awkwardly, he justifies himself, being given (as Mrs. Quickly apologized) to "allicholy and musing." Oh, it is not easy! As Gilbert Chesterton said, in a noble poem:

> The way is all so very plain
> That we may lose the way.

1,100 WORDS

THE managing editor, the city editor, the production manager, the foreman of the composing room, and the leading editorial writer having all said to us with a great deal of sternness, "Your copy for Saturday has got to be upstairs by such and such a time, because we are going to make up the page at so and so A. M.," we got rather nervous.

If we may say so, we did not like the way they said it. They spoke—and we are thinking particularly of the production manager—with a kind of paternal severity that was deeply distressing to our spirit. They are all, in off hours, men of delightfully easy disposition. They are men with whom it would be a pleasure and a privilege to be cast away on a desert island or in a crowded subway train. It is only just to say that they are men whom we admire greatly. When we meet them in the elevator, or see them at Frank's having lunch, how full of jolly intercourse they are. But in the conduct of their passionate and perilous business, that is, of getting the paper out on time,

a holy anguish shines upon their brows. The stern daughter of the voice of God has whispered to them, and they pass on the whisper to us through a megaphone.

That means to say that within the hour we have got to show up something in the neighbourhood of 1,100 words to these magistrates and overseers. With these keys—typewriter keys, of course—we have got to unlock our heart. Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour. Speaking of Milton, the damp that fell round his path (in Wordsworth's sonnet) was nothing to the damp that fell round our alert vestiges as we hastened to the Salamis station in that drench this morning. (We ask you to observe our self-restraint. We might have said "drenching downpour of silver Long Island rain," or something of that sort, and thus got several words nearer our necessary total of 1,100. But we scorn, even when writing against time, to take petty advantages. Let us be brief, crisp, packed with thought. Let it stand as drench, while you admire our proud conscience.)

Eleven hundred words—what a lot could be said in 1,100 words! We stood at the front door of the baggage car (there is an odd irony in this: the leading editorial writer, one of the most implacable of our taskmasters, is spending the summer at Sea Cliff, and he gets the last empty seat left in the smoker. So we, getting on at Salamis, have to

stand in the baggage car) watching the engine rock and roar along the rails, while the rain sheeted the level green fields. It is very agreeable to ride on a train in the rain. We have never known just why, but it conduces to thought. The clear trickles of water are drawn slantwise across the window panes, and one watches, absently, the curious behaviour of the drops. They hang bulging and pendulous, in one spot for some seconds. Then, as they swell, suddenly they break loose and zigzag swiftly down the pane, following the slippery pathway that previous drops have made. It is like a little puzzle game where you manœuvre a weighted capsule among pegs toward a narrow opening. "Pigs in clover," they sometimes call it, but who knows why? The conduct of raindrops on a smoking-car window is capricious and odd, but we must pass on. That topic alone would serve for several hundred words, but we will not be opportunist.

We stood at the front door of the baggage car, and in a pleasant haze of the faculties we thought of a number of things. We thought of some books we had seen up on East Fifty-ninth Street, in that admirable row of old bookshops, particularly Mowry Saben's volume of essays, "The Spirit of Life," which we are going back to buy one of these days; so please let it alone. We then got out a small notebook in which we keep memoranda of

books we intend to read and pored over it zealously. Just for fun, we will tell you three of the titles we have noted there:

"The Voyage of the Hoppergrass," by E. L. Pearson.
"People and Problems," by Fabian Franklin.
"Broken Stowage," by David W. Bone.

But most of all we thought, in a vague sentimental way, about that pleasant Long Island country through which the engine was haling and hallooing all those carloads of audacious commuters.

Only the other day we heard a wise man say that he did not care for Long Island, because one has to travel through a number of half-built suburbs before getting into real country. We felt, when he said it, that it would be impossible for us to tell him how much some of those growing suburbs mean to us, for we have lived in them. There is not one of those little frame dwellings that doesn't give us a thrill as we buzz past them. If you voyage from Brooklyn, as we do, you will have noticed two stations (near Jamaica) called Clarenceville and Morris Park. Now we have never got off at those stations, though we intend to some day. But in those rows of small houses and in sudden glimpses of modest tree-lined streets and corner drug stores we can see something that we are not subtle enough to express. We see it again in the scrap of green park by the station at

Queens, and in the brave little public library near the same station—which we cannot see from the train, though we often try to; but we know it is there, and probably the same kindly lady librarian and the children borrowing books. We see it again—or we did the other day—in a field at Mineola where a number of small boys were flying kites in the warm, clean, softly perfumed air of a July afternoon. We see it in the vivid rows of colour in the florist's meadow at Floral Park. We don't know just what it is, but over all that broad tract of hardworking suburbs there is a secret spirit of practical and persevering decency that we somehow associate with the soul of America.

We see it with the eye of a lover, and we know that it is good.

Having got as far as this, we took the trouble to count all the words up to this point. The total is exactly 1,100.

SOME INNS

THE other evening we went with Titania to a ramshackle country hotel which calls itself The Mansion House, looking forward to a fine robust meal. It was a transparent, sunny, cool evening, and when we saw on the bill of fare *half broiled chicken*, we innocently supposed that the word *half* was an adjective modifying the compound noun, *broiled-chicken*. Instead to our sorrow and disappointment, it proved to be an adverb modifying *broiled* (we hope we parse the matter correctly). At any rate, the wretched fowl was blue and pallid, a little smoked on the exterior, raw and sinewy within, and an affront to the whole profession of innkeeping. Whereupon, in the days that followed, looking back at our fine mood of expectancy as we entered that hostelry, and its pitiable collapse when the miserable travesty of victuals was laid before us, we fell to thinking about some of the inns we had known of old time where we had feasted not without good heart.

To speak merely by sudden memory, for in-

stance, there was the fine old hotel in Burlington, Vermont—is it called the Van Ness House?—where we remember a line of cane-bottomed chairs on a long shady veranda, where one could look out and see the town simmering in that waft of hot and dazzling sunshine that pours across Lake Champlain in the late afternoon: and The Black Lion, Lavenham, Suffolk; where (unless we confuse it with a pub in Bury St. Edmunds where we had lunch), there was, in the hallway, a very fine old engraving called Pirates Decoying a Merchantman, in which one pirate, dressed in woman's clothes, stood up above the bulwarks waving for assistance, while the cutlassed ruffians crouched below ready to do their bloody work when the other ship came near enough. Nor have we forgotten the Saracen's Head, at Ware, whence we went exploring down the little river Lea on Izaak Walton's trail; nor the Swan at Bibury in Gloucestershire, hard by that clear green water the Colne; nor another Swan at Tetsworth in Oxfordshire, which one reaches after bicycling over the beechy slope of the Chilterns, and where, in the narrow taproom, occurred the fabled encounter between a Texas Rhodes Scholar logged with port wine and seven Oxfordshire yokels who made merry over his power of carrying the red blood of the grape.

Our friend C. F. B., while we were meditating

these golden matters, wrote to us that he is going on a walking or bicycling trip in England next summer, and asks for suggestions. We advise him to get a copy of Muirhead's *England* (the best general guidebook we have seen) and look up his favourite authors in the index. That will refer him to the places associated with them, and he can have rare sport in hunting them out. There is no way of pilgrimage so pleasant as to follow the spoor of a well-loved writer. Referring to our black notebook, in which we keep memoranda of a modest pilgrimage we once made to places mentioned by two of our heroes, viz., Boswell and R. L. S., we think that if we were in C. F. B.'s shoes, one of the regions we would be most anxious to revisit would be Dove Dale, in Derbyshire. This exquisite little valley is reached from Ashbourne, where we commend the Green Man Inn (visited more than once by Doctor Johnson and Boswell). This neighbourhood also has memories of George Eliot, and of Izaak Walton, who used to go fishing in the little river Dove; his fishing house is still there. Unfortunately, when we were in those parts we did not have sense enough to see the Manyfold, a curious stream (a tributary of the Dove) which by its habit of running underground caused Johnson and Boswell to argue about miracles.

Muirhead's book will give C. F. B. sound counsel about the inns of that district, which are many

and good. The whole region of the Derbyshire Peak is rarely visited by the foreign tourist. Of it, Doctor Johnson, with his sturdy prejudice, said: "He who has seen Dove Dale has no need to visit the Highlands." The metropolis of this moorland is Buxton: unhappily we did not make a note of the inn we visited in that town; but we have a clear recollection of claret, candlelight, and reading *Weir of Hermiston* in bed; also a bathroom with hot water, not too common in the cheap hostelries we frequented.

We can only wish for the good C. F. B. as happy an evening as we spent (with our eccentric friend Mifflin McGill) bicycling from the Newhaven Inn in a July twilight. The Newhaven Inn, which is only a vile kind of meagre roadhouse at a lonely fork in the way (where one arm of the signpost carries the romantic legend "To Haddon Hall"), lies between Ashbourne and Buxton. But it is marked on all the maps, so perhaps it has an honourable history. The sun was dying in red embers over the Derbyshire hills as we pedalled along. Life, liquor, and literature lay all before us; certes, we had no thought of ever writing a daily column! And finally, after our small lanterns were lit and cast their little fans of brightness along the flowing road, we ascended a rise and saw Buxton in the valley below, twinkling with lights—

And when even dies, the million-tinted,
And the night has come, and planets glinted
Lo, the valley hollow
Lamp-bestarred!

Nor were all these ancient inns (to which our heart wistfully returns) on British soil. There was the Hôtel de la Tour, in Montjoie, a quaint small town somewhere in that hilly region of the Ardennes along the border between Luxemburg and Belgium. Our memory is rather vague as to Montjoie, for we got there late one evening, after more than seventy up-and-down miles on a bicycle, hypnotic with weariness and the smell of pine trees and a great warm wind that had buffeted us all day. But we have a dim, comfortable remembrance of a large clean bedroom, unlighted, in which we duskily groped and found no less than three huge beds among which we had to choose; and we can see also a dining room brilliantly papered in scarlet, with good old prints on the walls and great wooden beams overhead. Two bottles of ice-cold beer linger in our thought: and there was some excellent work done on a large pancake, one of those durable fleshy German *Pfannkuchen*. For the odd part of it was (unless our memory is wholly amiss) Montjoie was then (1912) supposed to be part of Germany, and they pronounced it Mon-yowey. But the Reich must have felt that this was not permanent, for

they had not Germanized either the name of the town or of the hostelry.

And let us add, in this affectionate summary, the Lion—(*Hotel zum Löwen*)—at Sigmaringen, that delicious little haunt on the upper Danube, where the castle sits on a stony jut overlooking the river. Algernon Blackwood, in one of his superb tales of fantasy (in the volume called *The Listener*) has told a fascinating gruesome story of the Danube, describing a sedgy, sandy, desolate region below the Hungarian border where malevolent inhuman forces were apparent and resented mortal intrusion. But we cannot testify to anything sinister in the bright water of the Danube in the flow of its lovely youth, above Sigmaringen. And if there were any evil influences, surely at Sigmaringen (the ancient home and origin of the Hohenzollerns, we believe) they would have shown themselves. In those exhilarating miles of valley, bicycled in company with a blithe vagabond who is now a professor at Cornell, we learned why the waltz was called "The Blue Danube." So heavenly a tint of transparent blue-green we have never seen elsewhere, the hurrying current sliding under steep crags of gray and yellow stone, whitened upon sudden shallows into long terraces of broken water. There was a wayside chapel with painted frescoes and Latin inscriptions (why didn't we make a note of them, we wonder?)

and before it a cold gush sluicing from a lion's mouth into a stone basin. A blue crockery mug stood on the rim, and the bowl was spotted with floating petals from pink and white rose-bushes. We can still see our companion, tilting a thirsty bearded face as he drank, outlined on such a backdrop of pure romantic beauty as only enriches irresponsible youth in its commerce with the world. The river bends sharply to the left under a prodigious cliff, where is some ancient castle or religious house. There he stands, excellent fellow, forever (in our memory) holding that blue mug against a Maxfield Parrish scene.

Just around that bend, if you are discreet, a bathe can be accomplished, and you will reach the Lion by supper time, vowing the Danube the loveliest of all streams.

Of the Lion itself, now that we compress the gland of memory more closely, we have little to report save a general sensation of cheerful comfort. That in itself is favourable: the bad inns are always accurately tabled in mind. But stay—here is a picture that unexpectedly presents itself. On that evening (it was July 15, 1912) there was a glorious little girl, about ten years old, taking supper at the Lion with her parents. Through the yellow shine of the lamps she suddenly reappears to us, across the dining room—rather a more luxurious dining room than the two wayfarers

were accustomed to visit. We can see her straight white frock, her plump brown legs in socks (not reaching the floor as she sat), her tawny golden hair with a red ribbon. The two dusty vagabonds watched her, and her important-looking adults, from afar. We have only the vaguest impression of her father: he was erect and handsome and not untouched with pride. (Heavens, were they some minor offshoot of the Hohenzollern tribe?) We can see the head waiter smirking near their table. Across nine years and thousands of miles they still radiate to us a faint sense of prosperity and breeding; and the child was like a princess in a fairy tale. Ah, if only it had all been a fairy tale. Could we but turn back the clock to that summer evening when the dim pine-alleys smelled so resinous on the Muehlberg, turn back the flow of that quick blue river, turn back history itself and rewrite it in chapters fit for the clear eyes of that child we saw.

Well, we are growing grievous: it is time to go out and have some cider. There are many other admirable inns we might soliloquize—The Seven Stars in Rotterdam (Molensteeg 19, "nabij het Postkantoor"); Gibson's Hotel, Rutland Square, Edinburgh ("Well adapted for Marriages," says its card); the Hotel Davenport, Stamford, Connecticut, where so many palpitating playwrights have sat nervously waiting for the opening per-

formance; the Tannhäuser Hotel in Heidelberg, notable for the affability of the chambermaids. Perhaps you will permit us to close by quoting a description of an old Irish tavern, from that queer book *The Life of John Buncle, Esq.* (1756). This inn bore the curious name The Conniving House:

"The Conniving-House (as the gentlemen of Trinity called it in my time, and long after) was a little public house, kept by *Jack Macklean*, about a quarter of a mile beyond Rings-end, on the top of the beach, within a few yards of the sea. Here we used to have the finest fish at all times; and in the season, green peas, and all the most excellent vegetables. The ale here was always extraordinary, and everything the best; which, with its delightful situation, rendered it a delightful place of a summer's evening. Many a delightful evening have I passed in this pretty thatched house with the famous *Larrey Grogan*, who played on the bagpipes extreme well: dear *Jack Lattin*, matchless on the fiddle, and the most agreeable of companions; that ever charming young fellow, *Jack Wall* . . . and many other delightful fellows; who went in the days of their youth to the shades of eternity. When I think of them and their evening songs—*We will go to Johnny Macklean's—to try if his ale be good or no*, etc., and that years and infirmities begin to oppress me—What is life!"

There is a fine, easy, mellow manner of writing, worthy the subject. And we—we conclude with honest regret. Even to write down the names of all the inns where we have been happy would be the pleasantest possible way of spending an afternoon. But we advise you to be cautious in adopting our favourites as stopping places. Some of them are very humble.

GISSING

OUR subject, for the moment, is Gissing—and when we say Gissing we mean not the author of that name, but the dog. He was called Gissing because he arrived, in the furnace man's poke, on the same day on which, after long desideration, we were united in holy booklock with a copy of "By the Ionian Sea."

Gissing needs (as the man said who wrote the preface to Sir Kenelm Digby's *Closet*) no Rhetoricating Floscules to set him off. He is (as the man said who wrote a poem about New York) vulgar of manner, underbred. He is young: his behaviour lacks restraint. Yet there is in him some lively prescription of that innocent and indivisible virtue that Nature omitted from men and gave only to Dogs. This is something that has been the cause of much vile verse in bad poets, of such gruesome twaddle as Senator Vest's dreadful outbark. But it is a true thing.

How absurd, we will interject, is the saying: "Love me, love my dog." If he really is my dog, he won't let you love him. Again, one man's dog is

another man's mongrel. Mr. Robert Cortes Holliday, that quaint philosopher frequently doggishly nicknamed Owd Bob, went to Washington lately to see President Harding. His eye fell upon the White House Airedale. Now Owd Bob is himself something of an Airedale trifler, and cherishes the memory of a certain Tristram Shandy, an animal that frequently appeared in the lighter editorials of the *Bookman* when Mr. Holliday (then the editor) could think of nothing else to write about. And of Mr. Harding's dog Mr. Holliday reports, with grave sorrow: "I don't think he is a good Airedale. He has too much black on him. Now Shandy had only a small saddle of black. . . ."

But such are matters concerning only students of full-bred dogs.

As to Gissing: we were trying to think, while writing the preceding excursion, how to give you his colour. Yellow is a word too violent, too vulgarly connotative. Brown is a muddy word. Sandy is too pale. Gamboge is a word used by artists, who are often immoral and excitable. Shall we say the colour of a corncob pipe, singed and tawnied by much smoking? Or a pigskin tobacco pouch while it is still rather new? Or the colour of the *Atlantic Monthly* in the old days, when it lay longer on the stands than it does now, and got faintly bleached? And in this colour, whatever it

is, you must discern a dimly ruddy tinge. On his forehead, which is not really a forehead, but a continuation of a long and very vulpine nose, there is a small white stripe. It runs upward from between his eyes, but cants slightly to one side (like a great many journalists). There is a small white patch on his chin. There is a white waistcoat on his chest, or bosom if you consider that a more affectionate word. White also are the last twelve bristles (we have counted them) on his tail (which is much too long). His front ankles bend inward rather lopsidedly, as though he had fallen downstairs when very young. When we stoke the furnace, he extends his forward legs on the floor (standing erect the while in his rearward edifice) and lays his head sideways on his paws, and considers us in a manner not devoid of humour.

Not far from our house, in that desirable but not very residential region which we have erst described as the Forest of Arden, there is a pond. It is a very romantic spot, it is not unlike the pond by which a man smoking a trichinopoly cigar was murdered in one of the Sherlock Holmes stories. (The Boscombe Valley Mystery!) It is a shallow little pond, but the water is very clear; last winter when it was frozen it always reminded us of the cheerful advertising of one of the ice companies, it was so delightfully transparent. This pond is a kind of Union League Club for the frogs at this

time of year; all night long you can hear them reclining in their armchairs of congenial mud and uttering their opinions, which vary very little from generation to generation. Most of those frogs are Republicans, we feel sure, but we love them no less.

In this pond Gissing had his first swim one warm Sunday recently. The party set out soon after breakfast. Gissing was in the van, his topaz eyes wild with ambition. Followed a little red express wagon, in which sat the Urchiness, wearing her best furry hat which has, in front, a small imitation mouse-head with glass eyes. The Urchin, wearing a small Scotch bonnet with ribbons, assisted in hauling the wagon. Gissing had not yet been tested in the matter of swimming: this was a sober moment. Would he take gladly to the ocean? (So the Urchin innocently calls our small sheet of water, having by a harmless ratiocination concluded that this term applies to any body of water not surrounded by domestic porcelain.)

Now Gissing is passionate in the matter of chasing sticks hurled abroad. On seeing a billet seized and held aloft with that sibilant sound which stirs his ingenuous spirit to prodigies of pursuit, his eyes were flame, his heart was apoplexy. The stick flew aloft and curved into the pond, and he rushed to the water's edge. But there, like the recreant knight in the Arthurian idyl, he

paused and doubted. There was Excalibur, floating ten feet from shore. This was a new experience. Was it written that sticks should be pursued in this strange and alien element? He barked querulously, and returned, his intellect clouded with hesitation. What was this etiquette? He was embarrassed.

Another stick was flung into the trembling mere. This time there was no question. When the gods give the same sign twice, the only answer is obey. A tawny streak crossed the small meadow, and leaped unquestioningly into the pond. There was a plunging and a spattery scuffle, and borne up by a million years of heredity he pursued the floating enemy. It was seized, and a large gulp of water also, but backward he came bearing it merrily. Then, also unknowing that he was fulfilling old tradition, he came as near as possible to the little group of presbyters and dehydrated himself upon them. Thus was a new experience added to this young creature. The frogs grew more and more pensive as he spent the rest of the morning churning the pond hither and thither.

That will be all about Gissing for the present.

TADPOLES

NEAR our house, out in the sylvan Salamis Estates, there is a pond. We fear we cannot describe this pond to you in a way to carry conviction. You will think we exaggerate if we tell you, with honest warmth, how fair the prospect is. Therefore, in sketching the scene, we will be austere, churlish, a miser of adjectives. We will tell you naught of sun-sparkle by day where the green and gold of April linger in that small hollow landskip, where the light shines red through the faint bronze veins of young leaves—much as it shines red through the finger joinings of a child's hand held toward the sun. We will tell you naught of frog-song by night, of those reduplicated whistlings and peepings. We will tell you naught of . . . No, we will be austere.

On one side, this pond reflects the white cloudy bravery of fruit trees in flower, veterans of an orchard surviving an old farmhouse that stood on the hilltop long ago. It burned, we believe: only a rectangle of low stone walls remains. Opposite, the hollow is overlooked by a bumpy hillock

fringed with those excellent dark evergreen trees—shall we call them hemlocks?—whose flat fronds silhouette against the sky and contribute a feeling of mystery and wilderness. On this little hill are several japonica trees, in violent ruddy blossom; and clumps of tiger lily blades springing up; and bloodroots. The region prickles thickly with blackberry brambles, and mats of honeysuckle. Across the pond, looking from the waterside meadow where the first violets are, your gaze skips (like a flat stone deftly flung) from the level amber (dimpled with silver) of the water, through a convenient dip of country where the fields are folded down below the level of the pool. So the eye skittering across the water, leaps promptly and cleanly to blue ranges by the Sound, a couple of miles away. All this, a mere introduction to the real theme, which is Tadpoles.

We intended to write a poem about those tadpoles, but Endymion tells us that Louis Untermeyer has already smitten a lute on that topic. We are queasy of trailing such an able poet. Therefore we celebrate these tadpoles in prose. They deserve a prose as lucid, as limpid, as cool and embracing, as the water of their home.

Coming back to tadpoles, the friends of our youth, shows us that we have completed a biological cycle of much import. Back to tadpoles in one generation, as the adage might have said.

Twenty-five years ago we ourself were making our first acquaintance with these friendly creatures, in the immortal (for us) waters of Cobb's Creek, Pennsylvania. (Who was Cobb, we wonder?) And now our urchins, with furious glee, applaud their sire who wades the still frosty quags of our pond, on Sunday mornings, to renew their supply of tads. It is considered fair and decent that each batch of tadpoles should live in their prison (a milk bottle) only one week. The following Sunday they go back to the pond, and a new generation take their places. There is some subtle kinship, we think, between children and tadpoles. No childhood is complete until it has watched their sloomy and impassive faces munching against the glass, and seen the gradual egress (as the encyclopædia pedantically puts it) of their tender limbs, the growing froggishness of their demeanour.

Some time when you are exploring in the Britannica, by the way, after you have read about Tactics and William Howard Taft, turn to the article on Tadpoles and see if you can recognize them as described by the learned G. A. B. An amusing game, we submit, would be to take a number of encyclopædia descriptions of familiar things, and see how many of our friends could identify them under their scientific nomenclature.

But it is very pleasant to dally about the pond on a mild April morning. While the Urchiness

mutters among the violets, picking blue fistfuls of stalkless heads, the Urchin, on a plank at the waterside, studies these weedy shallows which are lively with all manner of mysterious excitement, and probes a waterlogged stump in hope to recapture Brer Tarrypin, who once was ours for a short while. Gissing (the juvenile and too enthusiastic dog) has to be kept away from the pond by repeated sticks thrown as far as possible in another direction; otherwise he insists on joining the tadpole search, and, poking his snout under water, attempts to bark at the same time, with much coughing and smother.

The tadpoles, once caught, are taken home in a small yellow pail. They seem quite cheerful. They are kept, of course, in their native fluid, which is liberally thickened with the oozy emulsion of moss, mud, and busy animalculæ that were dredged up with them in clutches along the bottom of the pond. They lie, thoughtful, at the bottom of their milk bottle, occasionally flourishing furiously round their prison. But, since reading that article in the Britannica, we are more tender toward them. For the learned G. A. B. says: "A glandular streak extending from the nostril toward the eye is the lachrymal canal." Is it possible that tadpoles weep? We will look at them again when we go home to-night. We are, in the main, a kind-hearted host. If they show any signs of effusion. . . .

MAGIC IN SALAMIS

WHY is it (we were wondering, as we walked to the station) that these nights of pearly wet Long Island fog make the spiders so active? The sun was trying to break through the mist, and all the way down the road trees, bushes, and grass were spangled with cobwebs, shining with tiny pricks and gems of moisture. These damp, mildewy nights that irritate us and bring that queer soft grayish fur on the backs of our books seem to mean high hilarity and big business to the spider. Along the hedge near the station there were wonderful great webs, as big as the shield of Achilles. What a surprising passion of engineering the spider must go through in the dark hours, to get his struts and cantilevers and his circling gossamer girders properly disposed on the foliage.* Darkness is no difficulty to

*Perhaps the structural talent of our Salamis arachnids is exceptional. Perhaps it is due to the fact that the famous Engineers' Country Club is near by. Can the spiders have learned their technology by watching those cheerful scientists on the golf greens?

him, evidently. If he lays his web on the grass, he builds it with a little tunnel leading down to earth, where he hides waiting his breakfast. But on such a morning, apparently, with thousands of webs ready, there can hardly have been enough flies to go round; for we saw all the appetent spiders had emerged from their tubes and were waiting impatiently on the web itself—as though the host should sit on the table-cloth waiting for his guest. Put a finger at the rim of the web and see how quickly he vanishes down his shaft. Most surprising of all it is to see the long threads that are flung horizontally through the air, from a low branch of a tree to the near-by hedge. They hang, elastic and perfect, sagged a little by a run of fog-drops almost invisible except where the wetness catches the light. Some were stretched at least six feet across space, with no supporting strands to hold them from above—and no branches from which the filament could be dropped. How is it done? Does our intrepid weaver hurl himself madly six feet into the dark, trusting to catch the leaf at the other end? Can he jump so far?

All this sort of thing is, quite plainly, magic. It is rather important to know, when you are dealing with magic, just where ordinary life ends and the mystery begins, so that you can adjust yourself to incantations and spells. As you make your green

escape from town (which has magic of its own, but quite different) you must clearly mark the place where you pierce the veil. We showed it to Endymion lately. We will tell you about it.

There is a certain point, as you go out to Salamis on the railroad, when you begin to perceive a breath of enchantment in the landscape. For our own part, we become aware of a subtle spice of gramarye as soon as we see the station lamps at East Williston, which have tops like little green hats. Lamps of this sort have always had a fascination for us, and whenever we see them at a railway station we have a feeling that that would be a nice place to get off and explore.

And, of course, after you pass East Williston there is that little pond in which, if one went fishing, he could very likely pull up a fine fleecy cloud on his hook. Then the hills begin, or what we on Long Island consider hills. There are some fields on the left of the train that roll like great green waves of the sea; they surge up against the sky and seem about to spill over in a surf of daisies.

A quiet road runs up a hill, and as soon as you pass along its green channel, between rising thickets where rabbits come out to gape, you feel as though walking into a poem by Walter de la Mare. This road, if pursued, passes by a pleasing spot where four ways cross in an attenuated X. Off to one side is a field that is very theatrical in

effect: it always reminds us of a stage set for *As You Like It*, the Forest of Arden. There are some gigantic oak trees and even some very papier-maché-looking stumps, all ready for the duke, "and other Lords, like Foresters," to do their moralizing upon; and in place of the poor sequestered stag there is a very fine plushy cow, grazing, hard by a very agreeable morass. At the back (*L. U. E.*) is discovered a pleasing ruin, the carcass of an ancient farmstead, whose stony ribs are thickset with brambles; and the pleasant melancholy of an abandoned orchard rounds off the scene in the wings, giving a fine place for Rosalind and Celia and the leg-weary Touchstone to abide their cue.

Choosing the left-hand arm of the X, and moving past wild rose bushes toward the even richer rose-garden of the sunset, the fastidious truant is ushered (as was our friend Endymion the other evening) upon a gentle meadow where a solitary house of white stucco begs for a poet as occupant. This house, having been selected by Titania and ourself as a proper abode for Endymion and his family, we waited until sunset, frogsong, and all the other amenities of life in Salamis were suitable for the introduction of our guest to the scene. This dwelling, having long lain untenanted, has a back door that stands ajar and we piloted the awe-struck lyrist inside. Now nothing rages so

merrily in the blood as the instinct of picking out houses for other people, houses that you yourself do not have to live in; and those Realtors whom we have dismayed by our lack of enthusiasm would have been startled to hear the orotund accents in which we vouched for that property, sewage, messuage, and all. Here, we cried, is the front door (facing the sunset) where the postman will call with checks from your publishers; and here are the porcelain laundry tubs that will make glad the heart of the washerwoman (when you can get one).

Endymion's guileless heart was strongly uplifted. Not a question did he ask as to heating arrangements, save to show a mild spark in his eye when he saw the two fireplaces. Plumbing was to him, we saw, a matter to be taken on faith. His paternal heart was slightly perturbed by a railing that ran round the top of the stairs. This railing, he feared, was so built that small and impetuous children would assuredly fall headlong through it, and we discussed means of thwarting such catastrophe. But upstairs we found the room that caused our guest to glimmer with innocent cheer. It had tall casement windows looking out upon a quiet glimpse of trees. It had a raised recess, very apt for a bust of Pallas. It had space for bookcases. And then, on the windowsill, we found the dead and desiccated corpse of a swallow.

It must have flown in through a broken pane on the ground floor long ago and swooped vainly about the empty house. It lay, pathetically, close against the shut pane. Like a forgotten and unuttered beauty in the mind of a poet, it lay there, stiffened and silent.

CONSIDER THE COMMUTER

WHEN they tell us the world is getting worse and worse, and the follies and peevishness of men will soon bring us all to some damnable perdition, we are consoled by contemplating the steadfast virtue of commuters. The planet grows harder and harder to live on, it is true; every new invention makes things more complicated and perplexing. These new automatic telephones, which are said to make the business of getting a number so easy, will mean (we suppose) that we will be called up fifty times a day—instead of (as now) a mere twenty or thirty, while we are swooning and swinking over a sonnet. But more and more people are taking to commuting and we look to that to save things.

Because commuting is a tough and gruelling discipline. It educes all the latent strength and virtue in a man (although it is hard on those at home, for when he wins back at supper time there is left in him very little of what the ladies so quaintly call "soul"). If you study the demeanour of fellow-passengers on the 8:04 and the 5:27 you will see a quiet and well-drilled acceptiveness, a pious non-

resistance, which is not unworthy of the antique Chinese sages.

Is there any ritual (we cry, warming to our theme) so apt to imbue the spirit with patience, stolidity, endurance, all the ripe and seasoned qualities of manhood? It is well known that the fiercest and most terrible fighters in the late war were those who had been commuters. It was a Division composed chiefly of commuters that stormed the Hindenburg Stellung and purged the Argonne thickets with flame and steel. Their commanding officers were wont to remark these men's carelessness of life. It seemed as though they hardly heeded whether they got home again or not.

See them as they stand mobbed at the train gate, waiting for admission to the homeward cars. A certain disingenuous casualness appears on those hardened brows; but beneath burn stubborn fires. These are engaged in battle, and they know it—a battle that never ends. And while a warfare that goes on without truce necessarily develops its own jokes, informalities, callousnesses, disregard of wounds and gruesome sights, yet deep in their souls the units never forget that they are drilled and regimented for struggle. We stood the other evening with a Freeport man in the baggage compartment at the front of a train leaving Brooklyn. We two had gained the bull's-eye window at the nose of the train and sombrely watched the spar-

kling panorama of lights along the track. Something had gone wrong with the schedule that evening, and the passengers of the 5:27 had been shunted to the 5:30. As fellow mariners will, we discussed famous breakdowns of old and the uncertainties of the commuter's life. "Yes," said our companion, "once you leave home you never know when you'll get back." And he smiled the passive, placable smile of the experienced commuter.

It is this reasonable and moderate temper that makes the commuter the seed wherewith a new generation shall be disseminated. He faces troubles manifold without embittered grumbling. His is a new kind of Puritanism, which endures hardship without dourness. When, on Christmas Eve, the train at Jamaica was so packed that the aisle was one long mass of unwillingly embraced passengers, and even the car platforms were crowded with shivering wights, and the conductor buffeted his way as best he could over our toes and our parcels of tinsel balls, what was the general cry? Was it a yell against the railroad for not adding an extra brace of cars? No, it was good-natured banter of the perspiring little officer as he struggled to disentangle himself from forests of wedged legs. "You've got a fine, big family in here," they told him: "you ought to be proud of us." And there was a sorrowing Italian who had with him a string of seven children who had tunnelled and burrowed

their way down the packed aisle of the smoking car and had got irretrievably scattered. The father was distracted. Here and there, down the length of the car, someone would discover an urchin and hold him up for inspection. "Is this one of them?" he would cry, and Italy would give assent. "Right!" And the children were agglomerated and piled in a heap in the middle of the car until such time as a thinning of the crowd permitted the anxious and blushing sire to reassemble them and reprove their truancy with Adriatic lightnings from his dark glowing eyes.

How pleasing is our commuter's simplicity! A cage of white mice, or a crated goat (such are to be seen now and then on the Jamaica platform) will engage his eye and give him keen amusement. Then there is that game always known (in the smoking car) as "pea-knuckle." The sight of four men playing will afford contemplative and apparently intense satisfaction to all near. They will lean diligently over seat-backs to watch every play of cards. They will stand in the aisle to follow the game, with apparent comprehension. Then there are distinguished figures that move through the observant commuter's peep-show. There is the tall young man with the beaky nose, which (as Herrick said)

> Is the grace
> And proscenium of his face.

He is one of several light-hearted and carefree gentry who always sit together and are full of superb cheer. Those who travel sometimes with twinges of perplexity or skepticism are healed when they see the magnificent assurance of this creature. Every day we hear him making dates for his cronies to meet him at lunch time, and in the evening to see him towering above the throng at the gate. We like his confident air toward life, though he is still a little too jocular to be a typical commuter.

But the commuter, though simple and anxious to be pleased, is shrewdly alert. Every now and then they shuffle the trains at Jamaica just to keep him guessing and sharpen his faculty of judging whether this train goes to Brooklyn or Penn Station. His decisions have to be made rapidly. We are speaking now of Long Island commuters, whom we know best; but commuters are the same wherever you find them. The Jersey commuter has had his own celebrant in Joyce Kilmer, and we hope that he knows Joyce's pleasant essay on the subject which was published in that little book, *The Circus and Other Essays*. But we gainsay the right of Staten Islanders to be classed as commuters. These are a proud and active sort who are really seafarers, not commuters. Fogs and ice floes make them blench a little; but the less romantic troubles of broken brake-shoes leave them unscotched.

Of Long Island commuters there are two classes: those who travel to Penn Station, those who travel to Brooklyn. Let it not be denied, there is a certain air of aristocracy about the Penn Station clique that we cannot waive. Their tastes are more delicate. The train-boy from Penn Station cries aloud "Choice, delicious apples," which seems to us almost an affectation compared to the hoarse yell of our Brooklyn news-agents imploring "Have a comic cartoon book, 'Mutt and Jeff,' 'Bringing Up Father,' choclut-covered cherries!" The club cars all go to Penn Station: there would be a general apoplexy in the lowly terminal at Atlantic Avenue if one of those vehicles were seen there. People are often seen (on the Penn Station branch) who look exactly like the advertisements in *Vanity Fair*. Yet we, for our humility, have treasures of our own, such as the brightly lighted little shops along Atlantic Avenue and a station with the poetic name of Autumn Avenue. The Brooklyn commuter points with pride to his monthly ticket, which is distinguished from that of the Penn Station nobility by a red badge of courage—a bright red stripe. On the Penn Station branch they often punch the tickets with little diamond-shaped holes; but on our line the punch is in the form of a heart.

When the humble commuter who is accustomed to travelling via Brooklyn is diverted from his

accustomed orbit, and goes by way of the Pennsylvania Station, what surprising excitements are his. The enormousness of the crowd at Penn Station around 5 P. M. causes him to realize that what he had thought, in his innocent Brooklyn fashion, was a considerable mob, was nothing more than a trifling scuffle. But he notes with pleasure the Penn Station habit of letting people through the gate before the train comes in, so that one may stand in comparative comfort and coolness downstairs on the train platform. Here a vision of luxury greets his eyes that could not possibly be imagined at the Brooklyn terminal—the Lehigh Valley dining car that stands on a neighbouring track, the pink candles lit on the tables, the shining water carafes, the white-coated stewards at attention. At the car's kitchen window lolls a young coloured boy in a chef's hat, surveying the files of proletarian commuters with a glorious calmness of scorn and superiority. His mood of sanguine assurance and self-esteem is so complete, so unruffled, and so composed that we cannot help loving him. Lucky youth, devoid of cares, responsibilities, and chagrins! Does he not belong to the conquering class that has us all under its thumb? What does it matter that he (probably) knows less about cooking than you or I? He gazes with glorious cheer upon the wretched middle class, and as our train rolls away we see him still

gazing across the darkling cellars of the station with that untroubled gleam of condescension, his eyes seeming (as we look back at them) as large and white and unspeculative as billiard balls.

In the eye of one commuter, the 12:50 SATURDAY ONLY is the most exciting train of all. What a gay, heavily bundled, and loquacious crowd it is that gathers by the gate at the Atlantic Avenue terminal. There is a holiday spirit among the throng, which pants a little after the battle down and up those steps leading from the subway. (What a fine sight, incidentally, is the staglike stout man who always leaps from the train first and speeds scuddingly along the platform, to reach the stairs before any one else.) Here is the man who always carries a blue cardboard box full of chicks. Their plaintive chirpings sound shrill and disconsolate. There is such a piercing sorrow and perplexity in their persistent query that one knows they have the true souls of minor poets. Here are two cheerful stenographers off to Rockaway for the week-end. They are rather sarcastic about another young woman of their party who always insists on sleeping under sixteen blankets when at the shore.

But the high point of the trip comes when one changes at Jamaica, there boarding the 1:15 for Salamis. This is the train that on Saturdays takes back the two famous club cars, known to all travellers on the Oyster Bay route. Behind partly

drawn blinds the luncheon tables are spread; one gets narrow glimpses of the great ones of the Island at their tiffin. This is a militant moment for the white-jacketed steward of the club car. On Saturdays there are always some strangers, unaccustomed to the ways of this train, who regard the two wagons of luxury as a personal affront. When they find all the seats in the other cars filled they sternly desire to storm the door of the club car, where the proud steward stands on guard. "What's the matter with this car?" they say. "Nothing's the matter with it," he replies. Other more humble commuters stand in the vestibule, enjoying these little arguments. It is always quite delightful to see the indignation of these gallant creatures, their faces seamed with irritation to think that there should be a holy of holies into which they may not tread.

A proud man, and a high-spirited, is the conductor of the 4:27 on weekdays. This train, after leaving Jamaica, does not stop until Salamis is reached. It attains such magnificent speed that it always gets to Salamis a couple of minutes ahead of time. Then stands the conductor on the platform, watch in hand, receiving the plaudits of those who get off. The Salamites have to stand patiently beside the train—it is a level crossing —until it moves on. This is the daily glory of this conductor, as he stands, watch in one hand, the

other hand on the signal cord, waiting for Time to catch up with him. "*Some* train," we cry up at him; he tries not to look pleased, but he is a happy man. Then he pulls the cord and glides away.

Among other articulations in the anatomy of commuting, we mention the fact that no good trainman ever speaks of a train *going* or *stopping* anywhere. He says, "This train *makes* Sea Cliff and Glen Cove; it don't make Salamis." To be more purist still, one should refer to the train as "he" (as a kind of extension of the engineer's personality, we suppose). If you want to speak with the tongue of a veteran, you will say, "He makes Sea Cliff and Glen Cove."

The commuter has a chance to observe all manner of types among his brethren. On our line we all know by sight the two fanatical checker players, bent happily over their homemade board all the way to town. At Jamaica they are so absorbed in play that the conductor—this is the conductor who is so nervous about missing a fare and asks everyone three times if his ticket has been punched—has to rout them out to change to the Brooklyn train. "How's the game this morning?" says someone. "Oh, I was just trimming him, but they made us change." However thick the throng, these two always manage to find seats together. They are still hard at it when Atlantic Avenue is

reached, furiously playing the last moves as the rest file out. Then there is the humorous newsagent who takes charge of the smoking car between Jamaica and Oyster Bay. There is some mysterious little game that he conducts with his clients. Very solemnly he passes down the aisle distributing rolled-up strips of paper among the card players. By and by it transpires that some one has won a box of candy. Just how this is done we know not. Speaking of card players, observe the gaze of anguish on the outpost. He dashes ahead, grabs two facing seats and sits in one with a face contorted with anxiety for fear that the others will be too late to join him. As soon as a card game is started there are always a half dozen other men who watch it, following every play with painful scrutiny. It seems that watching other people play cards is the most absorbing amusement known to the commuter.

Then there is the man who carries a heavy bag packed with books. A queer creature, this. Day by day he lugs that bag with him yet spends all his time reading the papers and rarely using the books he carries. His pipe always goes out just as he reaches his station; frantically he tries to fill and light it before the train stops. Sometimes he digs deeply into the bag and brings out a large slab of chocolate, which he eats with an air of being slightly ashamed of himself. The oddities of this

person do not amuse us any the less because he happens to be ourself.

So fares the commuter: a figure as international as the teddy bear. He has his own consolations —of a morning when he climbs briskly upward from his dark tunnel and sees the sunlight upon the spread wings of the Telephone and Telegraph Building's statue, and moves again into the stirring pearl and blue of New York's lucid air. And at night, though drooping a little in the heat and dimness of those Oyster Bay smoking cars, he is dumped down and set free. As he climbs the long hill and tunes his thoughts in order, the sky is a froth of stars.

THE PERMANENCE OF POETRY

WE HEARD a critic remark that no great sonnets are being written nowadays. What (he said morosely) is there in the way of a recent sonnet that is worthy to take its place in the anthologies of the future beside those of Sir Philip Sidney, Milton, Wordsworth, Keats, Mrs. Browning, Louise Guiney, Rupert Brooke, or Lizette Reese? (These were the names he mentioned.)

This moves us to ask, how can you tell? It takes time for any poem to grow and ripen and find its place in the language. It will be for those of a hundred or more years hence to say what are the great poems of our present day. If a sonnet has the true vitality in it, it will gather association and richness about it as it traces its slender golden path through the minds of readers. It settles itself comfortably into the literary landscape, incorporates itself subtly into the unconscious thought of men, becomes corpuscular in the blood of the language. It comes down to us in the accent of those who

have loved and quoted it, invigorated by our subtle sense of the permanent rightness of its phrasing and our knowledge of the pleasure it has given to thousands of others. The more it is quoted, the better it seems.

All this is a slow process and an inscrutable. No one has ever given us a continuous history of any particular poem, tracing its history and adventures after its first publication—the places it has been quoted, the hearts it has rejoiced. It could only be done by an infinity of toil and a prodigal largesse to clipping bureaus. It would be a fascinating study, showing how some poems have fought for their lives against the evaporation of Time, and how they have come through, sometimes, because they were carried and cherished in one or two appreciative hearts. But the point to bear in mind is, the whole question of the permanence of poetry is largely in the hands of chance. If you are interested to observe the case of some really first-class poetry which has been struggling for recognition and yet shows, so far, no sign of breaking through into the clear light of lasting love and remembrance, look at the poems of James Elroy Flecker.

Generally speaking, one law is plain: that it is not until the poet himself and all who knew him are dead, and his lines speak only with the naked and impersonal appeal of ink, that his value to

the race as a permanent pleasure can be justly appraised.

There is one more point that perhaps is worth making. It is significant of human experience that the race instinctively demands, in most of the poetry that it cares to take along with it as permanent baggage, a certain honourable sobriety of mood. Consider Mr. Burton E. Stevenson's great *Home Book of Verse*, that magnificent anthology which may be taken as fairly indicative of general taste in these matters. In nearly 4,000 pages of poetry only three or four hundred are cynical or satirical in temper. Humanity as a whole likes to make the best of a bad job: it grins somewhat ruefully at the bitter and the sardonic; but when it is packing its trunk for the next generation it finds most room for those poets who have somehow contrived to find beauty and not mockery in the inner sanctities of human life and passion. This thought comes to us on reading Aldous Huxley's brilliant and hugely entertaining book of poems called *Leda*. There is no more brilliant young poet writing to-day; his title poem is nothing less than extraordinary in pagan and pictorial beauty, but as a whole the cynical and scoffish tone of carnal drollery which gives the book its appeal to the humorously inclined makes a very dubious sandal for a poet planning a long-distance run. Please note that we are not

taking sides in any argument: we ourself admire Mr. Huxley's poems enormously; but we are simply trying, clumsily, to state what seem to us some of the conditions attaching to the permanence of beauty as arranged in words.

It is not to be supposed that you have done your possible when you have read a great poem once —or ten times. A great poem is like a briar pipe —it darkens and mellows and sweetens with use. You fill it with your own glowing associations and glosses, and the strong juices seep through, staining and gilding the grain and fibre of the words.

LETTING OUT THE FURNACE

THE prudent commuter (and all commuters are prudent, or the others are soon weeded out by the rigours of that way of life) keeps the furnace going until early May in these latitudes—assuming that there are small children in the house. None of those April hot waves can fool him; he knows that, with cunning management, two or three shovelfuls of coal a day will nurse the fire along, and there it is in case of a sudden chilly squall. But when at last he lets the fire die, and after its six months of constant and honourable service the old boiler grows cold, the kindly glow fades and sinks downward out of sight under a crust of gray clinkers, our friend muses tenderly in his cellar, sitting on a packing case.

He thinks, first, how odd it is that when he said to himself, "We might as well let the fire go out," it kept on sturdily burning, without attention or fuel, for a day and a half; whereas if he had, earlier in the season, neglected it even for a few hours, all would have been cold and silent. He remembers, for instance, the tragic evening with the mercury

around zero, when, having (after supper) arranged everything at full blast and all radiators comfortably sizzling, he lay down on his couch to read Leonard Merrick, intending to give all hands a warm house for the night. Very well; but when he woke up around 2 A. M. and heard the tenor winds singing through the woodland, how anxiously he stumbled down the cellar stairs, fearing the worst. His fears were justified. There, on top of the thick bed of silvery ashes, lay the last pallid rose of fire. For as every pyrophil has noted, when the draught is left on, the fire flees upward, leaving its final glow at the top; but when all draughts are shut off, it sinks downward, shyly hiding in the heart of the mass.

So he stood, still drowsily aghast, while Gissing (the synthetic dog) frolicked merrily about his unresponsive shins, deeming this just one more of those surprising entertainments arranged for his delight.

Now, on such an occasion the experienced commuter makes the best of a bad job, knowing there is little to be gained by trying to cherish and succour a feeble remnant of fire. He will manfully jettison the whole business, filling the cellar with the crash of shunting ashes and the clatter of splitting kindling. But this pitiable creature still thought that mayhap he could, by sedulous care and coaxing, revive the dying spark. With such

black arts as were available he wrestled with the despondent glim. During this period of guilty and furtive strife he went quietly upstairs, and a voice spoke up from slumber. "Isn't the house very cold?" it said.

"Is it?" said this wretched creature, with great simulation of surprise. "Seems very comfortable to me."

"Well, I think you'd better send up some more heat," said this voice, in the tone of one accustomed to command.

"Right away," said the panic-stricken combustion engineer, and returned to his cellar, wondering whether he was suspected. How is it, he wondered, that ladies know instinctively, even when vested in several layers of blankets, if anything is wrong with the furnace? Another of the mysteries, said he, grimly, to the synthetic dog. By this time he knew full well (it was 3 A. M.) that there was naught for it but to decant the grateful of cinders and set to work on a new fire.

Such memories throng in the mind of the commuter as he surveys the dark form of his furnace, standing cold and dusty in the warm spring weather, and he cleans and drains it for the summer vacation. He remembers the lusty shout of winter winds, the clean and silver nakedness of January weather, the shining glow of the golden coals, the comfortable rustling and chuckle of

the boiler when alive with a strong urgency of steam, the soft thud and click of the pipes when the pressure was rising before breakfast. And he meditates that these matters, though often the cause of grumbles at the time, were a part of that satisfying reality that makes life in the outposts a more honest thing than the artificial convenience of great apartment houses. The commuter, no less than the seaman, has fidelities of his own; and faithful, strict obedience to hard necessary formulæ favours the combined humility and self-respect that makes human virtue. The commuter is often a figure both tragic and absurd; but he has a rubric and discipline of his own. And when you see him grotesquely hasting for the 5:27 train, his inner impulse may be no less honourable than that of the ship's officer ascending the bridge for his watch under a dark speckle of open sky.

IN THE BARBER'S CHAIR

THERE is no time when we need spiritual support so much as when we are having our hair cut, for indeed it is the only time when we are ever thoroughly and entirely Bored. But having found a good-natured barber who said he would not mind our reading a book while he was shearing, we went through with it. The ideal book to read at such a time (we offer you this advice, brave friends) is the *Tao* of Lao-Tse, that ancient and admirable Chinese sage. (Dwight Goddard's translation is very agreeable.) *The Tao*, as of course you know, is generally translated The Way, i.e., the Way of Life of the Reasonable Man.

Lao-Tse, we assert, is the ideal author to read while the barber is at his business. He answers every inquiry that will be made, and all you have to do is hold the book up and point to your favourite marked passages.

When the barber says, genially, "Well, have you done your Christmas shopping yet?" we raise the book and point to this maxim:

Taciturnity is natural to man.

When he says, "How about a nice little shampoo this morning?" we are prompt to indicate:

The wise man attends to the inner significance of things and does not concern himself with outward appearances.

When, as we sit in the chair, we see (in the mirror before us) the lovely reflection of the beautiful manicure lady, and she arches her eyebrows at us to convey the intimation that we ought to have our hands attended to, old Lao-Tse is ready with the answer. We reassure ourself with his remark:

Though he be surrounded with sights that are magnificent, the wise man will remain calm and unconcerned.

When the shine boy offers to burnish our shoes, we call his attention to:

He who closes his mouth and shuts his sense gates will be free from trouble to the end of life.

When the barber suggests that if we were now to have a liberal douche of bay rum sprayed over our poll it would be a glittering consummation of his task, we show him the words:

If one tries to improve a thing, he mars it.

And when (finally) the irritated tonsor suggests that if we don't wait so long next time before get-

ting our hair cut we will not be humiliated by our condition, we exhibit Lao-Tse's aphorism:

The wise man is inaccessible to favour or hate; he cannot be reached by profit or injury; he cannot be honoured or humiliated.

"It's very easy," says the barber as we pay our check; "just drop in here once a month and we'll fix you up." And we point to:

The wise man lives in the world, but he lives cautiously, dealing with the world cautiously. Many things that appear easy are full of difficulties.

THOUGHTS IN THE SUBWAY

I

WE HEAR people complain about the subway: its brutal competitive struggle, its roaring fury and madness. We think they have not sufficiently considered it.

Any experience shared daily and for a long time by a great many people comes to have a communal and social importance; it is desirable to fill it with meaning and see whether there may not be some beauty in it. The task of civilization is not to be always looking wistfully back at a Good Time long ago, or always panting for a doubtful millennium to come; but to see the significance and secret of that which is around us. And so we say, in full seriousness, that for one observer at any rate the subway is a great school of human study. We will not say that it is an easy school: it is no kindergarten; the curriculum is strenuous and wearying, and not always conducive to blithe cheer.

But what a tide of humanity, poured to and

fro in great tides over which the units have little control. What a sharp and troubled awareness of our fellow beings, drawn from study of those thousands of faces—the fresh living beauty of the girls, the faces of men empty of all but suffering and disillusion, a shabby errand boy asleep, goggling with weariness and adenoids—so they go crashing through the dark in a patient fellowship of hope and mysterious endurance. How can one pass through this quotidian immersion in humanity without being, in some small degree, enriched by that admiring pity which is the only emotion that can permanently endure under the eye of a questioning star?

Why, one wonders, should we cry out at the pangs and scuffles of the subway? Do we expect great things to come to pass without corresponding suffering? Some day a great poet will be born in the subway—spiritually speaking; one great enough to show us the terrific and savage beauty of this multitudinous miracle. As one watches each of those passengers, riding with some inscrutable purpose of his own (or an even more inscrutable lack of purpose) toward duty or liberation, he may be touched with anger and contempt toward individuals; but he must admit the majesty of the spectacle in the mass. One who loves his country for a certain candour and quick vigour of spirit will view the scene again and again in

the hope of spying out some secrets of the national mind and destiny. Daily he bathes in America. He has that curious sense of mystical meaning in common things that a traveller feels coming home from abroad, when he finds even the most casual glimpses strangely pregnant with national identity. In the advertisements, despite all their absurdities; in voices humorous or sullen; even in the books that the girls are reading (for most girls read books in the subway) he will try to divine some authentic law of life.

He is but a poor and mean-spirited lover—whether of his city, his country, or anything else—who loves her only because he has known no other. We are shy of vociferating patriotism because it is callow and empty, sprung generally from mere ignorance. The true enthusiast, we would like to think, is he who can travel daily some dozen or score of miles in the subway, plunged in the warm wedlock of the rush hours; and can still gather some queer loyalty to that rough, drastic experience. Other than a sense of pity and affection toward those strangely sculptured faces, all busy upon the fatal tasks of men, it is hard to be precise as to just what he has learned. But as the crowd pours from the cars, and shrugs off the burden of the journey, you may see them looking upward to console themselves with perpendicular loveliness leaping into the clear sky. Ah, they are

well trained. All are oppressed and shackled by things greater than themselves; yet within their own orbits of free movement they are masters of the event. They are patient and friendly, and endlessly brave.

II

The train roared through the subway, that warm typhoon whipping light summer dresses in a multitudinous flutter. All down the bright crowded aisle of patient humanity I could see their blowing colours.

My eyes were touched with Truth: I saw them as they are, beautiful and brave.

Is Time never sated with loveliness? How many million such he has devoured, and must he take these, too? They are so young, so slender, so untutored, such unconscious vessels of amazing life; so courageous in their simple finery, so unaware of the Enemy that waits for us all. With what strange cruelties will he trouble them, their very gaiety a temptation to his hand? See them on Broadway at the lunch hour, pouring in their vivacious thousands onto the pavement? Is there no one who wonders about these merry little hostages? Can you look on them without marvelling at their gallant mien?

They are aware of their charms, but unconscious of their loveliness. Surely they are a new genera-

tion of their sex, cool, assured, even capable. They are happy, because they do not think too much; they are lovely, because they are so perishable, because (despite their naïve assumption of certainty) one knows them so delightfully only as an innocent ornament of this business world of which they are so ignorant. They are the cheerful children of Down Town, and Down Town looks upon them with the affectionate compassion children merit. Their joys, their tragedies, are the emotions of children—all the more terrible for that reason.

And so you see them, day after day, blithely and gallantly faring onward in this Children's Crusade. Can you see that caravan of life without a pang? For many it is tragic to be young and beautiful and a woman. Luckily, they do not know it, and they never will. But in courage, and curiosity, and loveliness, how they put us all to shame. I see them, flashing by in a subway train, golden sphinxes, whose riddles (as Mr. Cabell said of Woman) are not worth solving. Yet they are all the more appealing for that fact. For surely to be a riddle which is not worth solving, and still is cherished as a riddle, is the greatest mystery of all. What strange journeys lie before them, and how triumphantly they walk the precipices as though they were mere meadow paths.

My eyes were touched with Truth, and I saw them

as they are, beautiful and brave. And sometimes I think that even Time must be sated with loveliness; that he will not crumble them or mar their gallant childishness; that he will leave them, their bright dresses fluttering, as I have seen them in the subway many a summer day.

PRÉCIS OF A JOURNEY

I

IT IS supposed that the things really important will somehow fix themselves in the gelatine of memory; that there is no need to take notes at the time because the true charm or significance will develop best by their own subconscious radiation. And indeed that notion is comfortable to the indolent, for it is almost impossible when travelling to sit down calmly and make inquest of one's mind. Yet there were some episodes I wish I had seized in a rough draft. I should like, now, to be more certain as to exactly what (if anything) I thought about them. (One of the delights of travelling is that one thinks so little.) If I had made a note, I could see them again more clearly; and with the vision before me I could now think about them better.

For instance the warm evening when we slipped down into the Second Cabin to join the dancing

there. I dare say it is true in most alcoves of society, as it so often is on board ship, that while the First Cabin passengers have more deck space the Second have more fun. There were not enough of us in the First, that voyage, for the really rowdy kind of fun that I most enjoy; but in the Second they were having it *con brio*. There, in a way to restore your faith in the rollicking capacities of humanity, you see plump pursers and their agile assistants dancing off the manifests of the day, most admirable rotarians. And there I saw the Irish girl who causes me pang for not having made a memorandum. I could have done it then and there without embarrassing her, she was so unconsciously moving in an artery of life. She was enjoying herself. I had hoped that our voyage to Ireland might give me at least one glimpse of a leprechaun; well, here she was, and I saw nothing more thrilling except perhaps an iceberg opal in afternoon, and the Northern Lights beyond Cape Race.

I haven't described her, and that is my anxiety. For now, two months later, she has almost vanished (as leprechauns do). She was smallish and darkish, and a bit greenish in her gaze; supple in the waist; airily active on a pair of well-planned shanks. Her hair, intended to be curly, was too nearly a frizzle by reason of some excessive toasting and cropping. But in the humidity of North Atlantic dancing some of its softness came back to

it. Her dress, both Elsie and I agreed (and Elsie knows a good deal about dresses) was, for her, just exactly right. There was a kind of gilded mosquito netting over a skirt of vigorous but uncostly—well, I would have called it chintz; but when I think about it, it was less opaque than chintz. It was rather short and flared out a bit round the haunches. Now you will say I am sentimentalizing, but there was truly an enchanting pathos about that dress for it effected such violent brave gaiety with such cheap materials.

And it is not only a dress that is important, it is what emerges from a dress. Something emerged that seemed very important. It was her elbow. She danced, like all natural and talented dancers, mostly in silence, but that white elbow spoke for her. It was held jauntily outward, even tilted a little above horizontal; it was poised as delicately as a butterfly's wing, satisfied and provoking. There was something about that elbow that would reassure you as to the fine flavour of life. There was swagger in it. None in the First Cabin would have dared dance with an ulna cocked so debonairly. Something like that, I dare say, the leprechauns of Antrim might stand akimbo under a whin bush to watch foreigners go by. Even her partner, whom I can't remember at all, he has vanished from the earth entirely so far as I'm concerned, even her partner must have been awed by the elbow; for

when I first saw him he was holding his hand edgeways at her back, in the genteelest fashion. Later on, though, I was pleased to observe, his large palm was spread out properly, as an enthusiast's should be. Good heavens, a woman needs a little coöperation when she's dancing, doesn't she?

Now I can see that because I'm writing this more or less consciously for print I tend to become jocular—the universal way to evade attempting the truth about anything. And the odd fact is that it no longer seems to me worth while to take the trouble of writing at all unless you try to say what you really feel. So don't let me get jocular about that sudden flash of perception. Already it has begun to fade, but in that hour it had its certainty. In the warm crowded lounge, which rolled gently to and fro, we followed the elbow round and round. When we came back from a small brandy in the adjoining smokeroom, she was taking part in some sort of Irish jig. What is there about those old rustic capers that makes one aware, This is what life was meant for?

It probably wouldn't have helped, after all, if I had tried to catch her exact profile and bearing in an immediate memorandum. She would still have been just as elusive. She was the problem of every art; to make you feel, amid the racket and thrill of life itself, the adorable pang of the irreproducible instant. In that innocent perspiring throng she

moved exultant, proud of her flimsy fineries, proud of the warmth in her veins, testimonial to this genial world, a small triumphant Now. Unconsciously she cried out to the artist, that old deceiving cry of every beauteous thing: *Here am I, and there is something in me that you and you only can understand.*

I looked for her again, that bright early morning when we debarked into the tender *Cynthia* for Londonderry. Was that she, that commonplace little figure in the machine-made suit and horridly shiny slippers too much strapped and scalloped, standing by the companionway and two gossoons clinging—to her elbow? I could not be sure, but it may have been.

I must be forgiven for putting down these inquirendoes haphazard and as they recur. I am embarrassed to realize that strong-minded travellers usually return with definite pronouncements about literature, politics, or international finance. When friendly Ship News asked me suddenly, in the very moment when Titania and I were gazing fiercely along the pier for our first glimpse of Urchin and Urchiness, what had been important in our trip, I could think of nothing except that I had been able to distinguish, blindfold, a 1911 Chambertin from a 1911 Musigny. That, though it is a test of discrimination analogously valuable to a literary taster (could you tell a Zane Grey from a Curwood

if the volume were not labelled?) you will say is unimportant. But you must be patient. I believe that some curious speculations will emerge. I shall tell you of my great discovery in Westminster Abbey, for instance. But mark you: I have no theory to depose and no sagacious conclusions to offer. The strong-minded traveller, I gather, goes abroad to comment on what he sees. I prefer to let what I see comment on me. All these strange scenes, these other people with their so different ways of doing things, have they come any nearer than I to the great human satisfactions? And if so, what can I do about it? That, if he is honest, is what the traveller asks himself.

Customs vary greatly among different ships. Some I know where towards midnight a polite, even regretful, but quite definite master-at-arms makes the round remarking gravely "Ladies must be off the deck." In some other vessels, they tell me, passengers may err all night long provided no hullabaloo is committed. The Chief Officer has described to me how, looking down from the bridge in the soft mid-summer dawn, he sees engrossed couples leaning together over the forward rail. Their heads are together and they palaver their sweet prolixities, quite Off Soundings. (What can remain to be said after all these hours?) But the hazy suffusion spreads and rises round them, and their comfortable darkness is gone. They realize

the day and chase hurriedly to their berths. And the man on the bridge continues his vigil, tolerant and serenely amused.

II

It surprises me that so few Americans take the comfortable and uncrowded route to Northern Ireland for a spring holiday. Ourselves (we were four) were the only passengers getting off at Moville merely to pursue the picturesque. Unlike arrival in England or France there is no special train waiting for you and all manner of calculated exploitation. You get into the tender *Cynthia*, where practically all others are homing Irish who tell you they haven't been back for thirty years; and you steam gently up lovely Lough Foyle for a couple of hours. That sort of approach gives you a happy sense of spaciousness. Green slopes of Ireland, waterside garden privacies, gorse-bright knolls and blue remoteness are already part of your mood when you reach Derry in the warm forenoon just as the children in white stockings are on their way to church. The town is at ease in Sunday morning hush, it had no idea you were coming. Two old women with black shawls over their heads, two idlers smoking on the pier bollards, these (beside the porters and agents who are there of necessity) are all who think it worth while to attend. *Cynthia* slides gently past the wharves and you read the signs on warehouses

with that eager attention given to the shabbiest random affiche on strange soil.

The little Metropole Hotel, a cheerful commercial house, is just round the corner from the quay, and we walked there in a strong blaze of sun. A tiny Irish maid in black uniform and bobbed hair was shyly waiting at the door to escort us upstairs. She gave me my first suspicion, confirmed afterward by further observation, that the legend of Irish comeliness is not just legend. Never have I seen so many strangely beautiful girls, beautiful with a touch of queer feyness, like their countryside. Tom and I, though inordinately weary, set off for the preliminary stroll without which one cannot be at ease in new scenes. The very first thing you see in Derry is posters of O. Henry (quite naturally they print it O'Henry) comedies at the cinema. The lure of the West, begun by the movies, is followed up by the Anchor-Donaldson Line suggestion: "To Canada for £3 to Approved Settlers." We loitered on the Foyle bridge watching the children trooping back from Sunday school. It was odd, in that peacefulness, to see them bustling regardlessly by two legends painted large on the rampart—"The spirit of 1688-90 is still as strong as ever" and "No peace this side the grave for the murderers." Such ejaculations are often to be found scrawled on walls and boardings in Irish storm centres; yet I think one must

not take them too seriously now, for the outstanding impression I had was that bitterness has very greatly subsided and that the Irish have settled down to work. We were struck by the rather gruesome coat of arms of Londonderry, cast in the iron gunwale of the bridge: a very discouraged looking skeleton sitting wearily outside a fortress; a memory, no doubt, of the famous siege.

A columnist would indeed be derelict who did not pause long enough in Derry to see St. Columb's cathedral; though a late breakfast and a nap were our chief needs. And by mid-afternoon you can be far out in the mountains of Donegal, among primroses, skylarks and cuckoos. I am not mentioning the name of the salmon-fishing inn near Lough Swilly where we spent our first night. If it became too well-known it would lose its perfect flavour of Somerville and Ross. That evening (it was early June) the birds sang until eleven o'clock, and were at it again soon after three. In the whitewashed village street (in some respects more like a French village than an English) we picked up what we thought at first must be a fairy horse-shoe, a tiny curve of iron, rusted and worn thin. We supposed it to be a shoe cast by one of their innumerable miniature donkeys; but it proved to be a thrifty heel-plate from a youngster's boot. Anyhow we kept it as souvenir. So is the commonest unregarded jetsam of one civilization trove and talis-

man for the stranger. It is not necessarily the stained glass and the rare wine that one is looking for abroad. Do I call for champagne as soon as I get aboard ship? Not so: almost any banker on the North Shore of Long Island can give you that surcharged and overrated fluid. I order gin-and-ginger-beer.

In Derry we had been promised (in a voice of extreme concession) "a Buick touring car." But the vehicle, when it quavered to the Metropole, proved to be one of the most ancient of Henry's stepchildren. Our elderly driver asserted that the Buick (evidently a well-known chariot in the town) had been suddenly and unexpectedly commandeered by the Bishop of Derry: an explanation so charming, whether true or false, that we acquiesced instantly. The old Ford taxi, though abrasive to the knees for a party of four, was admirable for our purpose. The very informal Irish Free State customs post, camped in a shack a few miles out of Derry, gave us no difficulty. Not far from Letterkenny a happy puncture stranded us some time by the way, and there was silence to hear larks and watch a tumbling brook. Had we had nothing else but that Sunday afternoon ride to Milford our voyage would have been worth while: the great spread of hill and valley, the white road between spiky hawthorns, the country girls bicycling with fluttered skirts. What miseries of

homesickness they must suffer for that exquisite landscape when they go to work in New York or Philadelphia—or are movies and ice cream sodas sufficient anodyne? And so I have a suggestion to any time-scanted kinsprit who wants a vacation in which he will see none of the things that the Miss Spences know all about but plenty that will do the heart good. Let him get aboard an Anchor Line ship, get off at Moville, and take the same ship back again when she stops at Moville on her return voyage. He will have a week to explore Donegal or Antrim, where he will be imbedded in loveliness like a comma living in one of Moira O'Neill's poems. He will hear the cuckoo holding up its tuning fork to the unheard melodies of earth. He will learn what a peat bog looks like; see the green light eddy in those surfy limestone sheers near Dunluce; observe Nature at her uproariously intricate scheming in the Giant's Causeway. If you ever supposed that she works just haphazard, the Causeway will disprove it to you. She has a plan of campaign all thought out, just as carefully as Nicholas Murray Butler. Five-sided polygons evidently have something to do with it; but you can sit on those basalt pedestals (she has concaved some of them just exactly to the sedentary norm) and figure it out. "The meanin' of it is," the battered guide kept beginning, but I'm afraid we gave him a sore shock. We were the only people

causewaying, and he was looking forward to a grand old spiel. "How much is it worth to you to let us see this alone?" I said to him. He looked at us bewildered, a stricken brightness in his eyes. We gave him half a crown to leave us, and he went off congested with his automatic rigmarole. It was brutal, yet necessary if we were to have peace in that stunning wilderness of solid geometry. As I suggested to Tom, who is a professional lecturer of huge renown, Suppose you went to Notre Dame University for your annual affair; and they met you at the train and said "Here's your check but we'd rather not have the lecture."

One of the quaintnesses of the Causeway, at any rate after a wet night, is the great number of snails going about their tranquil business. One of these, we reckoned by taking cross-bearings on his progress, would just be under an overhanging boulder about the time it was ready to fall. So we removed him several yards; though this troubled Tom who said we had set the earnest cochlea at least a hundred years back in his schedule.

III

One purpose of this journey was to settle, in the most æsthetic and philosophical manner, an ancient dispute between Madrigal and myself on the relative merits of Scotch and Irish whiskeys. So it

is that any account of the adventure at the bridge of Glen Dun must begin at the Refreshment Room of the railway station at Coleraine.

Our host at Milford had given us some valuable pointers on the three most famous Irish distillations—Power's, Jameson's, and Bushmills. To me, Bushmills had always been a name of bright tradition. Madrigal, I think, was inclined to vote for Jameson. But our adviser had rather led us to believe that in Ireland itself Power now holds the palm. (I would not have you interpret these differences too bitterly: one does not make comparisons among goddesses, nor choose a favourite of the three divine Graces.) See us, therefore, when changing trains at Coleraine with half an hour to wait, buying a bottle of Power as laboratory material. The young woman at the Refreshment Bar we imagined a lineal descendant of Kitty in the old ballad. ("When beautiful Kitty one morning was tripping with a pitcher of milk to the fair at Coleraine.") The bottle, duly wrapped, was entrusted to Madrigal's care. It went with us on the tram past the village of Bushmills itself, where we saw the home of that rival fluid wistful in the distance. That wet and chill evening at the Giant's Causeway it came forth once or twice from its parcel for gentlemanly inspection, so that I was well familiar with the shape and size of the package.

The next morning, in blinks of changing sunshine and shadow, we drove along the Antrim shore. Outpost cliffs of Scotland lay on the horizon, the light changed and rippled on the Irish hills, on the steep granites of Fair Head. In Ballycastle it was market day, we saw pigs bigger and pinker than it had ever occurred to us to imagine. If swine should ever again want a Gadarene setting in which to rush down a steep place into the sea, Ballycastle is their place. Then we turned off across the peat bogs. That morning is not forgotten. It was too excellent for speech. We sat, tightly compressed in Dan Daly's smart little car, silenced with air and contentment. Then, after those miles of moorland, where the fresh peats are neatly turned up like slabs of chocolate, we dipped into a sudden ravine. There were birch trees, a braying of rooks, and an elfin valley widening to the sea. This was our first glimpse of the glens of Antrim. Down there the village of Cushendun where Moira O'Neill lives. (We imagined we spotted her very house, a white mansy-looking home among trees.) Moira O'Neill, whose Songs of the Glens we had loved so long and most of which Madrigal knows by heart. This was a moment, our instincts told us, for commemoration.

It was high noon; the sun was well over the foreyard, if we took even the tallest of Antrim's mountains for reckoning. We pulled up on the

stone bridge, gazing down where the stream hurries. It was one of those collaborations of place and destiny when it is best not to speak one's intentions, but to allow natural good instinct to express itself. I was afoot beside the bulwark of the bridge. I could see Madrigal, sitting tightly wedged in the back seat, rummaging in his pocket. The familiar package emerged. He sat holding it, I stood contemplating him. This, for him even more than for me, was a millennial moment. I wondered what word of Irish magic would be uttered. I myself had only some vague feeling that gratitude should be uttered to the singer of the glens. She would never know that we had paused to look toward her home, had drunk her honour, and had passed on. But so often we know nothing of the nicest things that happen to us. Thus we all hung, pivoted on a crystal pinpoint of eternity, in that nooning sun. The rooks creaked in the treetops, birches and hazels quivered in blue light, the stream glittered in amber sluice.

"Don't you think we ought to do something about Moira?" said Madrigal, looking at me with something quick, bright, even fanatical in his handsome gray eyes.

"I sure do," I said, with my eye on the parcel.

"Well, here's to her!" he cried.

My heart stood still, then leaped against its usually solid moorings. It is a fact; then for per-

haps the only time, I felt that smothered spring of the cardiac muscles when the heart gathers itself to jump like a frog. For there, floating past my palsied arm, passing in slow curve, falling a hundred feet to the glen below, was the precious parcel. Our bottle, our laboratory bottle, our bottle (practically full, I remembered) of John Power and Sons, ten years old. Of course Moira O'Neill is a great poet, but I hadn't intended to *sacrifice* the bottle to her, only to drink it in her honour. I gazed in horror over the parapet. Madrigal's mercurial mind, I supposed, had been ungeared by this great moment. But there, thank God, lay the parcel safe on a little sandy shelf beside the brook. It had not broken.

I could not speak at first, and I still shuddered, for native impulse had almost carried me over the bulwark in attempt to seize the falling treasure. Yet in a way I admired my friend. Truly this was a notorious gesture. Not I, not I, would have done it. As my blood resumed its pedestrian march I admired him more than ever before. He had made a sacrifice worth while. For how many years had we dreamed of our voyage to Ireland; of the first bottle of Irish whiskey shared on its own sod. I turned to him, aghast, perhaps, but still with an unwilling homage breaking through. After all, the inn at Cushendall was only a mile away. . . .

"Come on then, let's drink it," he said. He

was pouring from a different bottle. He had divided the Power into two smaller flasks for convenience of transport. The package for which my heart had leapt was empty.

"Here's to Moira!" he said. "The Power and the Glory."

That afternoon we walked down Glen Arriff in sudden spangles of sun. We stumbled down the ravine among ferns, bluebells, rhododendrons, and a wheen of flowers and mosses dripping like sponges. In midsummer, I dare say, it is a bit picnicky, but in early June you have it to your lane. There are little falls, and quick iced-tea-coloured water in pots and cascades. Below one of the falls is a moist log cabin with coloured panes of glass through which you can see the bright curtain of water in queerly melodramatic tints. There is a little tea-barracks below the Glen, where a young woman showed us shamrock growing under a hedge. "And now," she said, with the air of one who had often been spoofed but who was still anxious to get at the truth, "Is Niagara really any bigger than Glen Arriff?"

IV

The other day I received a charming letter from K. B., of Waterville, Maine, written on the stationery of the Royal Hibernian Hotel, Dublin. It began: "I have the honour of being the first

to tell you that in Dublin there is a 'Dean Swift Taxi Service.' By it I was carried to this excellent hotel, thinking the while of your Long Island wanderings with 'Letters to Stella' in the pocket of your own 'Dean Swift.' I assume you have never been in Ireland. . . ."

And at the date K. B. wrote her friendly letter we had only lately left Dublin. This suggests how often in life one must inure one's self to being reproached for NOT doing the very thing one is that moment engaged upon.

Before coming to Dublin, though, it would be unseemly not to say a word about Belfast. Here we encounter another theme of wide human application, viz. the gay variousness of personal impression. Madrigal and I, travelling side by side and encountering the same experiences, were sure to be struck by quite different phases. For me, one interesting moment was the large shipyards, and an item in the *Northern Whig* that a new United Fruit Company steamer was to be built there. That pleased me, as those handsome white vessels are a familiar sight from this New York window where I write. Madrigal, however, is more likely to remember the excessive number of Presbyterian parsons we saw in the streets. These, I think, somewhat troubled him, as in their sable gear he could not distinguish them from genuine Papists.

There is still a gorgeously Dickensy flavour

about any "commercial" hotel in a provincial city of the British Isles. At the Imperial in Belfast you find it at its most pleasing. To sit in the Writing Room, pretending to read your *Northern Whig* but really watching the busy drummers compiling their business of the day; or to sit on a tall stool at the little circular bar in the lounge and hear them chaffing the handsome barmaid; or to see them at breakfast in the Commercial Room—this is to partake an aroma of life as distinctly British as a Liggett Drugstore is American. I thought that the barmaids of the Imperial had just the right touch of hotsy-totsy in their manner toward their clients, though I did not venture to use this phrase. It was at Erskine Mayne's excellent bookshop in Belfast that I made my first careful investigation as to what American writers are most highly esteemed by the British trade. Corroborated by further study in Dublin and London I can give you my list without fear of inaccuracy. I venture to say that in any lively bookshop in those islands you will find most of the following displayed in the window (I set down the names in no special order):

Emerson Hough
Kathleen Norris
Zane Grey
Jack London
C. A. Seltzer

Grace Richmond
Hulbert Footner
Joseph Lincoln
L. M. Montgomery
Achmed Abdullah
B. M. Bower
G. W. Ogden
J. W. Schultz
Eleanor H. Porter
J. O. Curwood

The Royal Hibernian, justly praised by K. B., looked just a little too swank for us. We went—and I am glad to pay grateful thanks to Mr. Ernest Boyd for the suggestion—to the delightful Standard Hotel. We had not been there long before I understood why it is frequented by Mr. Boyd and other men of letters. As befits a Standard Hotel its bookcases, in the Writing Room, are thoroughly equipped with standard literature. Dublin is eminently an intellectual city, and nowhere else in the world have I found a hotel equipped with the Koran, Virgil, Pindar, Cicero, Herodotus, Don Quixote, Shakespeare, Ruskin, Gibbon, and even my old flame, Kirke White. There was also "Chimes from a Jester's Bells" by R. J. Burdette.

I find in the Black Notebook, or Domesday Book as Madrigal called it (I was bursar on this voyage, and had to keep honourable item against a

future reckoning), the insidious memorandum *Debit Madrigal 2 naggins*. This may have been a gesture of courtesy on my friend's part, to atone for the shock I had suffered at the Bridge of Glen Dun. I wonder if K. B. knows what a naggin is? It was the proprietor of O'Farrelly's Grafton Bar who introduced us to it. It is a very tiny bottle that holds two whiskey glasses. Two glasses = one naggin, four naggins = one pint. We had gone to Dublin fortified with many kind suggestions from Doctor Canby and others as to literary people we should pay our respect to. And therefore it is humiliating to have to record that O'Farrelly's Grafton Bar and a certain sewer emptying into the Liffey were our chosen ports of call. I say this, I am aware, subject to misapprehension by the shallow; but to sit in a clean bar-room and hear the liberty of unlicensed thinking is one way to draw near the pulse of a strange country. Moreover those five noble casks behind the counter suggested to us an excellent ballad in five staves—one stave for each barrel. They were lettered as follows: FINE OLD PALE SHERRY, SANDEMAN'S OLD PORT, FINEST OLD JAMAICA RUM, JOHN POWER & SONS 10 YR. OLD, J. J. & SONS 10 YR. OLD.

As for the sewer, the explanation is easy. There is a place where a large drainage pipe of some sort empties into the river, and a good deal of harmless

refuse comes down. This is a place of congregation for seagulls who watch alertly for congenial scraps. Leaning over the river-wall you can see them hovering just below you, almost within reach of a hand. I have never had so perfect an opportunity to study those beautiful creatures. I wish I had the ornithophile pen of a Hudson to make you see them and forget the humbly candid scene. The exquisite silky wings, fringed with black; the pearly light shining through their tail-feathers, the quick shifting gaze bright with calculus and latent suspicion—such suspicion as every conscious creature secretly feels toward every other sharer in the enigma of life. Here was poetry indeed, poetry worthy of a city rich with a thousand strange intimations of temperament. Nor were these glorious gulls entirely unlike the fierce wigged lawyers whom we saw in Dublin Castle, swooping and picking at a poor little man in the dock. There, where a rather ragged Free State flag flies over the tower, the old state apartments are turned into courtrooms painted with the harp, and quaint charwomen cook their tea in the viceregal boudoirs. They look out on the grassy graves of six British officers buried in the back garden of the Castle. That, as every tactful Irishman tells you, not wishing to offend any possible sensibilities, was "in the Troublesome Times."

But I don't want K. B.—or Doctor Canby either—

to imagine that our days in Dublin had no specifically "literary" thrill. Madrigal and I did not actually ride in any of the Dean Swift taxis, but we gazed admiringly at the garage, near St. Patrick's Cathedral, where they are housed. In the Cathedral itself, tucked away at the back, is an old discarded pulpit. It was Swift's, the verger said; and I expressed some surprise that it wasn't still used. I should have thought that one of the chief prides of officiating at St. Patrick's would be to stand in the very punctuation of the great harpooneer. But no, said the verger, and with entire gravity—"It's not big enough for the preachers nowadays."—Is Swift's epitaph too well-known to be repeated here? I copied it down for you—

HIC DEPOSITUM EST CORPUS
JONATHAN SWIFT S.T.D.
HUJUS ECCLESIAE CATHEDRALIS DECAN
UBI SAEVA INDIGNATIO
ULTERIUS
COR LACERARE NEQUIT
ABI VIATOR
ET IMITARE SI POTERIS
STRENUUM PRO VIRILI
LIBERTATIS VINDICATOREM

Ah, the lovely scorn in the *Abi Viator* and in the *Si Poteris!*

Most of the books will tell you that Swift and

Stella were buried side by side. It is not quite true. There are at least two fathoms between them.

V

Perhaps the habit of writing on windowpanes with diamonds has gone out. But if one had a diamond, what would one write with it? It was François Premier (wasn't it?) who scratched the glass at Chambord with his laborious

SOUVENT FEMME VARIE
BIEN FOL EST QUI S'Y FIE

whereas Philippe Pot, that old Burgundian warrior of the fifteenth century, if left alone with any glaziery, incised a prettier and briefer epigram of his lady—TANT L VAUT. Oliver Goldsmith, on the glass of his window at Trinity College, Dublin, merely put his name and the date. *O. Goldsmith, March 1746*, you can see the broken fragment in the beautiful library at T. C. D. But you won't have much tranquillity to ponder it, for the garrulous attendant will be excessive on the manuscript of the Book of Kells. However, by attending him singly while the other prowled thoughtfully about, Madrigal and I managed to see some of the charms undistracted.

With pride the verger's bosom swells
And endlessly he tells and tells
The story of the Book of Kells.

I want to weave my own small spells,
Evoke my private heavens and hells
And sniff the fragrant calfskin smells
And dip my beezer in these wells
Of Irish Undefiled—
He tells
The story of the Book of Kells.

What I was wondering was how Oliver, the poor young student, got hold of a diamond.

It was delightful to loiter a while about the courts of T. C. D., to watch the boys in gowns and sand-coloured bags, the humorous-faced coeds, the frequent bicycles. A notice posted at the lodge took me quite into the Oxford feeling of thirteen years ago—*Senior Sophisters are reminded that before they can sit for the B. A. Exam. the fee must be paid to the Junior Bursar.* But there is more an air of alertness, less an air of picturesque luxury, than at Oxford. In some queer way you get the feeling that a larger proportion of these students are making sacrifices for their schooling, and that they have a living to earn. The undergraduate magazine, called *T. C. D.*, is as agreeably young as journals of that sort always are. Reading it I learned that the College Historical Society had lately debated the thesis "That the English Empire has seen its best days." The motion was lost A literary society of the women students had read a paper on T. S. Eliot. "In respect of Mr. Eliot's

poetry Miss FitzHenry said that, like most of the younger generation of American writers, he has been strongly influenced by his French contemporaries. She considered that his work marks an epoch in the development of American poetry. The meeting adjourned for tea."

To one who wearies of the waste and idle display in New York, who grins a little ruefully at the Peaches Browning and Rudolph Valentino phases of our era, there is a heartening sense of frugality in Dublin life. The most luxurious car that I saw was a Dodge sedan. The Abbey Players were not in action so we went one evening to the Gaiety to see an American mystery play—"In the Next Room," by Eleanor Robson and Harriet Ford. It was a quite worthy piece but the most interesting thing to observe was the faces in the audience. You see it again in the portraits in the Irish National Gallery. What is it in the Irish face that so oddly strikes the observer from New York? Is it the absence of certain Mediterranean and Levantine types that are part of our daily panorama here? My mind keeps coming back to the word *frugal*, I don't just know why. There seemed something sensitive, quaint, obstinate, and simple in those profiles as one watched them watching the stage. Comments of this sort are futile and vain, but there was a very real feeling that this middle-class audience (none in evening dress) had not been

spoiled by any pseudo-sophistications. I couldn't help thinking that it would have loved "Abie's Irish Rose"; and indeed it has its Mutt and Jeff in a Dublin newspaper every evening, buys its odds and ends at Woolworth's. One of the selections played by the orchestra was "Waters of the Perkiomen," and Madrigal and I wondered if anyone else in the house knew where that creek is. An almost equal surprise was to find Sargent's portrait of Woodrow Wilson in the gallery on Merrion Square.

I don't know just what Terenure is—the name of some suburb, I suppose. But most of the trams we saw carried that name, and one afternoon Madrigal and I rode out in that direction, then descended for a walk in a blow of rain. We admired a provocatively handsome young woman striding along with an Airedale terrier, quite regardless of the wet; but you soon give up noticing admirable women in Dublin, there are too many of them. We sheltered a while in a pub, and then found ourselves by the Milltown golf course where a solitary player was finishing his round in the wet. Madrigal, an enthusiastic golfer, was anxious to prove the quality of Irish turf, so we climbed up on the links and Madrigal begged permission to drive a couple of balls. The member, a young medical student, was delightfully hospitable. Fortunately Madrigal's drive was a beauty, in

spite of a bumpy gale. "It's easy to see he knows the game," said the medico. We adjourned to the clubhouse, and presently our host, due at his hospital, insisted on driving us back to town in his Dodge. In the course of that chat he told us quite seriously that he had heard that in Chicago hotel-doors were always made with a little loophole, so that you could look out before opening to make sure it wasn't a gunman. We denied this, but I think he still believes it so.

I do not think that Dublin gives up her secrets easily to the casual visitor, and I shall always be suspicious of those who summarize her in quick, sparkling vein. Trying to feel one's way toward the truth is often a dull and patient business. I confess that she gave me no easy clue to her temperament—as one notices in Paris, for instance, in the constant scream of bus-brakes. (Is it not thoroughly Parisian to be travelling too fast and then have to halt hastily?) It was surprising to one from New York, where buildings crash down and leap up again in a few months, to find the wreckage of her Troublesome Times only just now beginning to be repaired. Americans also will be amazed to find marked on thermometers that 55 to 65 degrees is Healthy Indoor Temperature. But there can be no question as to her charm. Wandering round Merrion Square or in St. Stephen's Green at dusk you may sometimes think

you have come within guessing distance of her troubled magic. But if so you'll not spoil it by trying to put it prematurely into speech.

When you get aboard the steamer at Kingstown (or Dun Laoghaire, pronounced Dunleary, as they write it now) on a bright breezy morning you'll find the swift little vessel lined with gulls. They sit along the lifeboats as though they were members of the crew. Thirteen of them flew with us all the way to Holyhead, more than sixty miles. I watched them carefully, they soared apparently without effort, keeping to windward and a little aft of us. The mail packet, speeding more than 20 knots with the characteristic ringing chime of turbine engines, never outsped their easy glide. (If a big transatlantic liner had a baby, it would be just like one of those trim cross-channel racers.) The gulls followed us; as far as I could see they never flapped their wings at all except when occasionally one would fall behind to investigate some jetsam. They appear to be merely lovely, but what a sharp eye they have for scraps.

And so I thought what a pretty and poetical bit one could write about those mysterious Irish gulls, their easy irresponsible grace, their bright fanatical eyes. One might pretend to see in them some symbol of the Irish soul. But it would only be a purple passage, and anyone without conscience can pull a purple passage. What I really thought

about those gulls, as the hill of Howth went dark behind us, was that they were too beautiful for words. And so they were.

VI

One of the world's greatest publicity men made a certain disaster on the Irish Sea famous as long as our language may endure. Perhaps that unenviable renown spurred the Irish Channel service into its modern comfort and efficiency. Though it is nothing new, for as long ago as old Jules Verne (see *Around the World in 80 Days*) the Irish mail packets were esteemed for grace and speed. Yet it would almost have been worth while to be naufraged on the Irish Sea, like Edward King in 1637, if one could be sure to have a *Lycidas* written about it. So I was thinking as the trim little *Scotia* swung round Holyhead in the breezy blue. Yet it would be a pity to have missed that train ride along the Cymric shore. To buy your *Times* at an English railway stall—even if you only smell it, and don't read it; I always choose British journalisms by the smell; how do they get that excellently fragrant paper?—and then settle down in one of their heavenly dining cars, admiring at your elbow the little holder specially built for your bottle of Bass—I wish you nothing worse some June meridian. I always have a look at the engine, to see its name. (It was the *Lord Rath-*

more.) I am always hoping to find one called *Sir Kenelm Digby*, and to see again the *Charles Lamb* that I once admired at Crewe. Though English friends insist that it was probably named for some divisional superintendent of the L. M. S.

The English like to believe that we, more than anyone, are ridden by our advertisers, but I have seen in both Paris and London papers the palm of the business office outstretched in a way that would seem queer in a reputable American journal. *Palma non sine pulvere* is the idea, obviously. It always strikes me as odd to find, in descriptions of gowns worn by ladies presented at Court, the names and addresses of the modistes. Yet perhaps it is just as reasonable as printing the name of the publisher in the review of a book. This is the kind of thing that I mean:

> Mrs N—— H——. A gown of cyclamen georgette embroidered with diamanté. A train of velvet brocade in a deeper shade of cyclamen, lined with silver and held at the shoulders with jewelled straps. A fan of shaded ostrich feathers. (Maison Alexander, 11, Conduit-street.)

Some of the ladies at that Presentation must have been plump, for the *Times* remarked that "the following gowns worn at their Majesties' Court were unavoidably held over, owing to pressure on space." How much more entertaining

if, instead of a mere inventory of the dresses, a little social précis were given of each lady, annotating the various qualifications (of charm, heredity, or stratagem) which brought her to make her curtsey. But it does not do to let the mind linger on philosophical possibilities.

Everyone who has walked in Westminster Abbey knows the stone in the floor marked O RARE BEN IOHNSON. But what not everyone realizes is that this is not the original stone, which was moved to the wall near by when it began to show signs of wear. And if you will study Ben's original stone a new thought may come to you about this most famous ejaculation of tenderness. The O and the RARE, in the original slab, are so spaced that it is hard to know whether they were meant as one word or two. Was the Jack Young (who had the inscription cut) a punster? Did he intend a play upon words? Or did the stonecutter misunderstand? Certainly a play upon words would have been much in the sentiment of the seventeenth century. So I suggest that the well-loved epitaph may have been intended as ORARE BEN IOHNSON—Pray for Ben Jonson (a use of the infinitive frequent in taphology). If the stone-mason misspelled Jonson's name he may also have misunderstood the Latin word. His accident, if accident it was, has made us all richer these three centuries. This suggestion is my one contribution

to seventeenth century scholarship, and I have a huge secret pride in it. I have explored the "Jonson Allusion-Book" (Bradley and Adams, Yale Univ. Press, 1922) to see whether the adjective *rare* was frequently applied to Ben: I don't find it, except in Herrick's "Hesperides" (1648). John Aubrey's "Brief Lives," that gorgeous "Who's Who" of the time, is our best source of information. Aubrey merely says:

> He lies buryed in the north aisle in the path of square stone (the rest is lozenge), opposite to the scutcheon of Robertus de Ros, with this inscription only on him, in a pavement square, of blew marble, about 14 inches square,
>
> O RARE BENN IOHNSON
>
> which was donne at the chardge of Jack Young (afterwards knighted) who, walking there when the grave was covering, gave the fellow eighteen pence to cutt it.

VII

The train leaves Paddington at 6.05 (6.5 is the way they write it) and the engine is called *Polar Star*. It doesn't go north, though, but westerly, into a green valley of sunset. It takes you into something even west of sunsets, that train—not an express happily, but a "stopping train" that loiters you gently into a land where even the railway platforms are gardens of flowers. At Taplow you'll lean out to smell them, not wondering why

poets live there. Off to the left you've seen Windsor Castle, pink in the flush of light, the royal standard aloft. Sir Thomas Malory, you say to yourself, ought to be the name of this engine. Such green and gold is afloat as shines through the boles of Arden. The elderly sage with wildly rumpled gray hair, pondering sheets of diagrams in the far corner of the smoker, might be Merlin himself. It is obviously an Oxford don.

There is a green fold of the world, a gap between the Chilterns and the Berkshire downs, where you will pass warily. Brightnesses other than sunset and Thames river flow through that dip. More than thirteen years of queerness go behind you as *Polar Star* trundles through. Old thoughts, like the swifts nesting in the railway cuttings, flicker on swordlike wing. Mossed tile roofs, chimney pots with blue threads of smoke, sweeps of yellow mustard in slopy fields. While you are standing at the Goring station, the world goes by with a roar and a ribboning flicker of plate glass windows—the Plymouth Express. Those names—Pangbourne, Cholsey, Moulsford, Wittenham Clumps. There was once a boy on a bicycle——

When you pass through that gap you are in a queer world indeed. Anything can happen. It is the battleground where old Arden elves retreat for their last stand. Railway stations are tranquil as

monasteries in the evening clearness. At Didcot there was a sound of anthems. It will never be explained, was it the station porters at their vesper hymn? Nothing can break that magic, for long ago you shut the door upon it and triple turned the key. Nothing can spoil it—and every incongruity adds to its Shakespearean comedy. Even the sign-boards in those enamelled meadows —*Beecham's Pills Lose No Time.*

And Oxford again—reached at dusk; the dark passages of the Golden Cross inn; still time for a twilight stroll to see how in bookshop windows Dean Inge's *Religion and the Ultimate* battles for place with *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. Oxford, the toy capital of fairyland, the youngest place on earth. The boys (how appallingly young they look) off to some revelry in their dinner jackets. The girls on their bikes next morning, their pretty sturdy legs wreathed in a flutter of rising skirts—just as ever, except the skirts now are shorter. Their new black caps—like medieval abbesses; that's different anyway. Oxford with a Woolworth's on the Corn. Go and have your bitter beer in the secret little Turf tavern, hidden away under New College bell tower. Not one visitor in ten thousand ever hears about the Turf. Go there and have your beer and remember you're still young.

PAUMANOK

I CALL him Paumanok, because I feel him specially in the earth of Long Island; but he lives everywhere. I have known him in the hot sun of Pennsylvania, where copper light rallies like Roman helmets round the boles of pachyderm beeches; in the linden arches and cool evening of moated Burgundy. He lives in every poet's heart, "and being helped, inhabits there." He is the dearest enemy of all, the darkest angel, *terræ filius*, spirit of mockery and loss.

He does not need to put his words in rhyme and soothe soft minds with sentimental music. He speaks direct. He is the lightning in the sycamore, the tunnelled anthill teeming in the sun. He is the spark of horror burning in the brain, the despair of poets waiting for a word; the silence fallen on lovers in whose reins warm understanding runs and yet they're tightened with idiot denials. Poets are his meat. He mocked Will Shakespeare, tweaked Molière, and that young fellow here in Cold Spring Harbor—what was

his name? Walt Whitman. So he mocks us all with terrene malice, and stings us to achievement unawares.

It is part of his sport that one should attempt to write of him at all. Clever people would deny his existence. There is a strange passage in Whitman's "Song of Myself" where for a moment Walt seemed ready to recant all his bravest doctrine. "I am given up by traitors, I talk wildly, I have lost my wits." That was when he was in the throe of Paumanok, the cruel imp. But blessed imp too, for in that quicksilver misery we all find ourselves one.

He is not content until we have humiliated, and confessed him. Absurdity, be thou my good, is the cry in his dark shriving boxes. At least confessions made to him are secret enough and rarely blabbed. Poets, for whom every darkness is Hallowe'en, sometimes pay their devoir to him in jolly masquerade. In prose it is rare. Poetry, the voice of dying men (or men being born again, who can tell?) is less mannerly.

This is part of his quaintness, that in those regions of refreshment where poets, theoretically, find their peace, his wave-length is most palpable. I mean in the country, close to soil, far from the gallant rectilinears and huge comedy of town. In the new washed world of clear morning things speak too plainly of what they mean. The bee

asleep in the hollyhock, the spider fiercely attentive in his silver ambush, the warm diffusion of mint leaves by the kitchen steps, the acorns rattling on the roof—every one a reminder of the vast tensions that hold the world together. The red beads of the dogwood tree strew the ground; and now the acorns are crackled underfoot: how many acorns must be trodden for one that comes to sprout? Panther-coloured prairies of Long Island, ardently tawny under dark wet sky; seagulls going effortless with the wind, their cusped arc of wings as unutterably curved as the lips of women adored, how does one obey the paradigm of these symbols? Paumanok laughs, and makes the poet laugh at himself. It cannot be done. Laughter is followed by silence. The tingling thrill of awe runs like a frost on thighs and shins. So he stands, beautiful ribald angel, between you and your dream.

Most he loves the natural comedian. Wordsworth knew him somewhat well, but that grave spirit offered our *terræ filius* thin sport. The mind of Keats was more his revelry. Keats once called him Belle Dame Sans Mercy. It doesn't matter what you call him: he is not sexed. He is mere mind, pure taunt, unbodied ecstasy of satire and defeat. It is the great laughers he can cudgel best. Blake knew him, and Meredith. He stands, ready to tweak, on every blank page. He has memorized

every unwritten poem. He sits on the dear corners of lips and sketches those faint lines that all the poets of the world have foolishly wanted to kiss away. He gives eyebrows their enchanted upward lift when they hear music. He hides in the Christmas tree. He abetted the oldest misunderstanding, that between man and God. He loads every rift with ore, so that he can make merry when you overwrite your prose. He drives the wedge of gross comedy that splits the sacred moment in two.

But perhaps cunning that can recognize him is cunning also to outwit. Admitted, he is of less avail. Spirit of futility, he is himself futile. He can take, hard pressed, the prettiest forms. That dangerous lovely book *Sirenica* comes brutally near giving his exact picture: he is the song of the sirens, the Imagined Better Thing. He is implex in every line of this barren bravado, telling me not to be a fool. But for a morning season I outface him. I have rounded Cape Stiff. On a hundred sheets I have made notation of his power, and destroyed them, he prevailing. But in his very homeland I shall snare him, the springald. These autumn thickets, these panther fields, will stand by me. It is for men, for men, not mocking ghosts, to make any ground sacred. It must be trodden by human feet, hear human voices; this gives meaning to the perilous sweetness of rain and air. The old gods are

dead, I hear him whiffling. Are they, then? Not by a damn sight.

> The gods are dead, you say to me,
> Old gods of terror and delight—
> And on the word, from every tree
> A Pan peeps out, a dryad white;
> When artists bend their dreams and hands
> All ages with one key unlock,
> And Master Shakespeare's yellow sands
> Are on the shores of Paumanok.

But be not untimely sure. You must prepare your minds for trouble. Did you think that poets spend their lonely nights in vain, just to count the patterns of the sky? Did you think it all a rumour, something invented by hysteric playwrights, a refrain from an old song, a wind rustling dry reeds? No, it is true, and you must let him have his worst with you. Spirit of horror that tells you your dream is fustian; warm guile in the barleycorn that fills you with idle vacations of mirth. He is the bird that flashes by the pane, the cold cold reason even too chill for grief. You must drink his tisane, be it bitter as hemlock. Quiet, quiet then, he'll tell you; so cunning that his mocking whisper can even sound like mercy. Sleep is the remedy, he'll say; and as the first Lethean undulation lifts the slackened line, draw

you back to mooring. Sleep, he whispers, to bring you so much nearer the last silence, when even the weariest head may never lie on the whitest breast.

There are who, in braver moments, over a fiasco of sweet Italian hillside, can talk of sublimating him, spiritualizing. Yes, I am instructed it can be done. But Passive Insistence is also a doctrine—simply Not Insisting. Drink him like wine: float with him as the gull floats in the blue wind across channel. "Their mastery of the air was their surrender to it," says a writer watchful of the gulls. So you may sometimes turn your gale to a wind of clear weather. Just Not Insisting. He can be cozened, too, by a little melancholy. For he can uncoil you your curliest mirth; but who was ever mocked out of a favourite grievance? And poets have whole troops of young and pretty sorrows, ready to dance at their command. The princely Landor (some read him still) knew this. "Poets are in general prone to melancholy; yet the most plaintive ditty hath imparted a fuller joy, and of longer duration, to its composer, than the conquest of Persia to the Macedonian." A young sorrow, sweet in its innocent finery, is too human, too tender, for our Paumanok to understand. Who was happier than the versifier, sweetening his doubts by measure, when he wrote his paraphrase of the endless theme—

How do men make their words endure
Beyond the night that has no cure,
And so avail them strong and sure
  Against the dark to-morrow?
Ask of the poet: he knows best,
Remembering how his hand was pressed
Against the softness of your breast
  O lovely lovely Sorrow!

How do we make a garden sweet?
The paths are soft beneath the feet
But ecstasy is incomplete
  Still waiting for to-morrow—
The linden tree let slip her seed,
In every bush the birds agreed
But I perceived my secret need—
  I had no pretty Sorrow!

How do we sanctify this place
And fill the naked air with grace
And carve To-day's imperfect face
  Upon the stone To-morrow?
To keep divinities divine
There must be acid in the wine
And so, to make this place a shrine
  Give room to tender Sorrow!

Let Reason, like the night-owl, pass
And cast his feather on the grass:
I'll find it there, and raise my glass
  And honour him—to-morrow.

To-night is Beauty to be sought—
She is a woman, to be taught;
To me, and me alone, she brought
The perfect gift of Sorrow.

The poet carries that most subtle enemy in his own too hospitable heart; but an enemy without whom he would be poor indeed. There are those who know not Paumanok, but I doubt their ignorance is bliss. For oh what serenity when you have done your duty by that imp of clay—have given him your ruddiest tenure for the hour, the week, the month, whatever he required. Then suddenly he is gone. Leaving the heart he leased a while and where you gave him such rich furnish, he can even conclude with what might be thought a tenderness. Perhaps it is his most cultivated cruelty, to unman you so? Yet almost you hear him say, as Sir Kenelm did to the Lady Venetia, "Hold high your gallant head, because I love you."

So he is gone, and the environing earth shines with new colour. There are the panther fields of autumn: they *did* stand by you. You smile, raking among the leaves. Out of silence a word has come. But have no fear that his secrets will out. No one knows him but you.

PRIESTESS

SHE sits within a tall four-sided desk, prettily enclosed as Ianthe or Rhodope in a quatrain by Landor. Across her fine dark head the two bright filaments are as decorative as a Greek fillet. They confirm her air of priestess or sibyl. In that great temple she sits among the fluted columns, a priestess of Mercury. Desk, do I call it? It is prie-dieu, mercy-seat. Yet how much lovelier is she than mere priestess. That cunningest appeal of all to the gust of man: priestess and wench in one.

Her hair, I don't need to tell you, is cropped close down the back, you can admire her glorious nape as she sits with her head bent a little forward. Down into the plain collar of her soft white blouse pass the living curves of her neck. Gosh, I say to myself, maybe I ought to have been a sculptor. Thank goodness I'm not. Not for me the pang of trying to put anything so mobile as that into the sudden death of Form. The sculptor, poor frenzied policeman, can rarely do better than a *proxime*

accessit. He is a cop making an arrest. He usually arrests the Innocent Bystander. The real culprit, Life Itself, escapes.

Her head is either bending tenderly forward, or looking quickly up over the high counter. How cunningly (had you ever thought?) the whole arrangement is planned so that she can watch her little flock of devotees, seeing that they don't leave the bronze confessionals without paying their proper congé. Is it that continual changing flex of muscles that makes her neck so comely? A soft light shines upward from her instrument board, so that the rouge of her cheeks—which in a crueller illumination would be excessive—seems just the charmingest flush of vital excitement. It is as though she were daintily embarrassed by the urgency of all these affairs, by the multiplication of calls upon her. That heightened colour of hers, artful as the theatre's tricks, adds such minute but goblin subtlety to the whole ceremony. And her looking up at you, from her low posture beneath the sheltering rampart. Women should always look up. As you watch from one side (oh, incorrigible watcher) under the shifting aperture of her blouse you will see perhaps a flash of that loveliest of curves, the little shallow slope in front of the shoulder. What shoulders she must have, bless her!

Tenderly, I said, she bends forward. There is

an extraordinary gallantry about that head. There is pride in it, the subtle pride of one who has the perfect savvy of her job, isn't going to be buffaloed by anything. But there is sweetness too: the most curious calm gentleness in the shape of her lips bending close to the speaking tube. Oh I know you think I'm absurd, you think I'm romancing; but even if so, what were we put here for but that? I have seen young mothers' lips leaning down just so to the brow of an infant. Delicately she touches the mouthpiece (that ingrate tube of rubber) with her lovely lips, brooding on it, talking into it tenderly, calmly, persuasively. A very small and impish sensitiveness trembles at the corner of those lips. I don't think she knows it is there: but it is at the corners that mouths, like streets, give themselves away. That hungry mouthpiece nestles to her, tightened to her very heart; she nurses Communication on her rich bosom. I have called that great hall a temple, it is just that. The big directories on the rack are like Bibles, and just as worshipfully conned. At least they are sibylline tomes, and one remembers in the Old Testament a book called Numbers. Is not hers, after all, a communion service?

Beauty is a strange conjunction of influences. To me, as I sometimes watch her surrounded by her clients, she seems very beautiful. I will not say she would always seem so, but in her own element

she is mistress of the event. A perfect operator nobly planned, to warn, to comfort, and command. Beautiful as she is, she has to be wise. Calm, unperturbed—with "deliberate speed, majestic instancy"—see her manage her anxious congregation. Noting numbers, making change, watching the row of booths, getting reports on Long Distance calls, doing special kindness for habitual customers, yet beneath all this coruscating detail moves the steady flow of her own temperament. There are some mysterious clients who are there day after day: it appears that they transact all their affairs in this public lobby. It is the cheapest way, surely, of Doing Business.

A whole shifting world of lights twinkles at her command. When her capable hands move, brightnesses flash on and off. As the Book of Numbers accurately says, "The pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service: and by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge." And she "takes the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, with the number of their names."

She is connoisseur of voices: she knows them all, the anxious, the impatient, the shaken, the rude. She even knows, perhaps, the inward sickness that precedes some connection of destiny. That troublesome infant on her breast, how gravely, how

wisely, how softly she cajoles it! "I'm waiting for a report on that Cincinnati call." "That's four times I've asked for a report. It's ridiculous." That is her severest reproach to those other unseen sisters who haven't made good. "It's ridiculous." Kindly she shepherds her little flock. She intercedes for them with the enigmatic divinities down the little tube. "There's a party here's in a hurry, he's only got a few minutes." "Now be sure to say that very distinctly, it's a personal call, he's got to get that party." And meanwhile carrying in her mind the details of a dozen concurrent calls. "Doylestown's still busy." "Philadelphia in Booth 15." "Mister, you forgot something." (This to the absent-minded patron who, having got his call, is hurrying away forgetting the fee.) "I'm still waiting for a report on Cincinnati." "Give me the manager's office, this is ridiculous."

Madonna of the wires! Calm, beautiful, unhurried, ready with equal skill to transact business of life and death or casual banter, you may not wonder that her motley congregation adore her. They save for her that specially healthy affection that men have for women who are competent in their task. And you may know too, by the quick alert flash of those handsome gray eyes that she is not just operator. She is woman, with all woman's terrifying charm. "You mustn't mind

my admiring you a little," I said to her. "I think you're wonderful."

For there never was priestess yet who did not tempt men to drag her away from the altar and make mere woman of her.

THE TREE THAT DIDN'T GET TRIMMED

IF YOU walk through a grove of balsam trees you will notice that the young trees are silent; they are listening. But the old tall ones—especially the firs—are whispering. They are telling the story of The Tree That Didn't Get Trimmed. It sounds like a painful story, and the murmur of the old trees as they tell it is rather solemn; but it is an encouraging story for young saplings to hear. On warm autumn days when your trunk is tickled by ants and insects climbing, and the resin is hot and gummy in your knots, and the whole glade smells sweet, drowsy, and sad, and the hardwood trees are boasting of the gay colours they are beginning to show, many a young evergreen has been cheered by it.

All young fir trees, as you know by that story of Hans Andersen's—if you've forgotten it, why not read it again?—dream of being a Christmas Tree some day. They dream about it as young girls dream of being a bride, or young poets of having a

volume of verse published. With the vision of that brightness and gayety before them they patiently endure the sharp sting of the ax, the long hours pressed together on a freight car. But every December there are more trees cut down than are needed for Christmas. And that is the story that no one—not even Hans Andersen—has thought to put down.

The tree in this story should never have been cut. He wouldn't have been, but it was getting dark in the Vermont woods, and the man with the ax said to himself, "Just one more." Cutting young trees with a sharp, beautifully balanced ax is fascinating; you go on and on; there's a sort of cruel pleasure in it. The blade goes through the soft wood with one whistling stroke and the boughs sink down with a soft swish.

He was a fine, well-grown youngster, but too tall for his age; his branches were rather scraggly. If he'd been left there he would have been an unusually big tree some day; but now he was in the awkward age and didn't have the tapering shape and the thick, even foliage that people like on Christmas trees. Worse still, instead of running up to a straight, clean spire, his top was a bit lopsided, with a fork in it.

But he didn't know this as he stood with many others, leaning against the side wall of the greengrocer's shop. In those cold December days he was

very happy, thinking of the pleasures to come. He had heard of the delights of Christmas Eve: the stealthy setting-up of the tree, the tinsel balls and coloured toys and stars, the peppermint canes and birds with spun-glass tails. Even that old anxiety of Christmas trees—burning candles—did not worry him, for he had been told that nowadays people use strings of tiny electric bulbs which cannot set one on fire. So he looked forward to the festival with a confident heart.

"I shall be very grand," he said. "I hope there will be children to admire me. It must be a great moment when the children hang their stockings on you!" He even felt sorry for the first trees that were chosen and taken away. It would be best, he considered, not to be bought until Christmas Eve. Then, in the shining darkness someone would pick him out, put him carefully along the running board of a car, and away they would go. The tire-chains would clack and jingle merrily on the snowy road. He imagined a big house with fire glowing on a hearth; the hushed rustle of wrapping paper and parcels being unpacked. Someone would say, "Oh, what a beautiful tree!" How erect and stiff he would brace himself in his iron tripod stand.

But day after day went by, one by one the other trees were taken, and he began to grow troubled. For everyone who looked at him seemed to have

an unkind word. "Too tall," said one lady. "No, this one wouldn't do, the branches are too skimpy," said another. "If I chop off the top," said the greengrocer, "it wouldn't be so bad?" The tree shuddered, but the customer had already passed on to look at others. Some of his branches ached where the grocer had bent them upward to make his shape more attractive.

Across the street was a Ten Cent Store. Its bright windows were full of scarlet odds and ends; when the doors opened he could see people crowded along the aisles, cheerfully jostling one another with bumpy packages. A buzz of talk, a shuffle of feet, a constant ringing of cash drawers came noisily out of that doorway. He could see flashes of marvellous colour, ornaments for luckier trees. Every evening, as the time drew nearer, the pavements were more thronged. The handsomer trees, not so tall as he but more bushy and shapely, were ranked in front of him; as they were taken away he could see the gayety only too well. Then he was shown to a lady who wanted a tree very cheap. "You can have this one for a dollar," said the grocer. This was only one third of what the grocer had asked for him at first, but even so the lady refused him and went across the street to buy a little artificial tree at the toy store. The man pushed him back carelessly, and he toppled over and fell alongside the wall. No one bothered to pick him

up. He was almost glad, for now his pride would be spared.

Now it was Christmas Eve. It was a foggy evening with a drizzling rain; the alley alongside the store was thick with trampled slush. As he lay there among broken boxes and fallen scraps of holly strange thoughts came to him. In the still northern forest already his wounded stump was buried in forgetful snow. He remembered the wintry sparkle of the woods, the big trees with crusts and clumps of silver on their broad boughs, the keen singing of the lonely wind. He remembered the strong, warm feeling of his roots reaching down into the safe earth. That is a good feeling; it means to a tree just what it means to you to stretch your toes down toward the bottom of a well-tucked bed. And he had given up all this to lie here, disdained and forgotten, in a littered alley. The splash of feet, the chime of bells, the cry of cars went past him. He trembled a little with self-pity and vexation. "No toys and stockings for me," he thought sadly, and shed some of his needles.

Late that night, after all the shopping was over, the grocer came out to clear away what was left. The boxes, the broken wreaths, the empty barrels, and our tree with one or two others that hadn't been sold, all were thrown through the side door into the cellar. The door was locked and he lay

there in the dark. One of his branches, doubled under him in the fall, ached so he thought it must be broken. "So this is Christmas," he said to himself.

All that day it was very still in the cellar. There was an occasional creak as one of the bruised trees tried to stretch itself. Feet went along the pavement overhead, and there was a booming of church bells, but everything had a slow, disappointed sound. Christmas is always a little sad, after such busy preparations. The unwanted trees lay on the stone floor, watching the furnace light flicker on a hatchet that had been left there.

The day after Christmas a man came in who wanted some green boughs to decorate a cemetery. The grocer took the hatchet, and seized the trees without ceremony. They were too disheartened to care. Chop, chop, chop, went the blade, and the sweet-smelling branches were carried away. The naked trunks were thrown into a corner.

And now our tree, what was left of him, had plenty of time to think. He no longer could feel anything, for trees feel with their branches, but they think with their trunks. What did he think about as he grew dry and stiff? He thought that it had been silly of him to imagine such a fine, gay career for himself, and he was sorry for other young trees, still growing in the fresh hilly country, who were enjoying the same fantastic dreams.

Now perhaps you don't know what happens tc the trunks of leftover Christmas trees. You could never guess. Farmers come in from the suburbs and buy them at five cents each for bean-poles and grape arbours. So perhaps (here begins the encouraging part of this story) they are really happier, in the end, than the trees that get trimmed for Santa Claus. They go back into the fresh, moist earth of spring, and when the sun grows hot the quick tendrils of the vines climb up them and presently they are decorated with the red blossoms of the bean or the little blue globes of the grape, just as pretty as any Christmas trinkets.

So one day the naked, dusty fir-poles were taken out of the cellar, and thrown into a truck with many others, and made a rattling journey out into the land. The farmer unloaded them in his yard and was stacking them up by the barn when his wife came out to watch him.

"There!" she said. "That's just what I want, a nice long pole with a fork in it. Jim, put that one over there to hold up the clothesline." It was the first time that anyone had praised our tree, and his dried-up heart swelled with a tingle of forgotten sap. They put him near one end of the clothesline, with his stump close to a flower bed. The fork that had been despised for a Christmas star was just the thing to hold up a clothesline. It was wash-

day, and soon the farmer's wife began bringing out wet garments to swing and freshen in the clean, bright air. And the very first thing that hung near the top of the Christmas pole was a cluster of children's stockings.

That isn't quite the end of the story, as the old fir trees whisper it in the breeze. The Tree That Didn't Get Trimmed was so cheerful watching the stockings, and other gay little clothes that plumped out in the wind just as though waiting to be spanked, that he didn't notice what was going on—or going up—below him. A vine had caught hold of his trunk and was steadily twisting upward. And one morning, when the farmer's wife came out intending to shift him, she stopped and exclaimed. "Why, I mustn't move this pole," she said. "The morning glory has run right up it." So it had, and our bare pole was blue and crimson with colour.

Something nice, the old firs believe, always happens to the trees that don't get trimmed. They even believe that some day one of the Christmas-tree bean-poles will be the starting-point for another Magic Beanstalk, as in the fairy tale of the boy who climbed up the bean-tree and killed the giant. When that happens, fairy tales will begin all over again.

THE 1855 PREFACE

ON JULY 21, 1855, Emerson sat down to write a letter that will not soon be forgotten. It was a letter acknowledging the receipt of a book that had been sent him: a book so odd in form and contents that he might well have disregarded it as many busy men disregard haphazard casuals of the mail. The frontispiece, engraved from a tintype, was a portrait, unidentified, of a bearded man, wistful or sulky in expression, arrogant in posture. His hat was tilted sideways, one hand knuckled on hip, flannel blouse open at the neck showing a dark tape-edged stevedore's undershirt. The quarto titlepage bore no author's name and no publisher's imprint. There followed, without a single word of explanation, a ten-page halloo in small dense type, double-columned on the big leaves; and the body of the volume itself, which looked like neither prose nor poetry, began with the announcement—dubiously chosen, one might think, to placate the New England brahmin—

> I celebrate myself,
> And what I assume you shall assume.

One could not have been surprised if Mr. Emerson had shuddered slightly, taken one half-fascinated glance at the dark undershirt, murmured, "It's magnificent but it's not Daguerre," and turned to the proceedings of the Harvard chapter of Phi Beta Kappa.

"I find it," wrote Emerson, "the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed." And his pen, gathering speed, went on to say words that are among the necessary footnotes in any permanent history of American literature.

Yes, it is seventy years since *Leaves of Grass* was first printed. In that lifetime it has passed through every vicissitude. Worshipped by the more sentimental radicals, shrunk from by the solid bourgeois, unheard of by the cameradoes for whom it was supposedly written, the target of attorney-generals in its youth, the perplexity of a dozen publishers, the gold-mine of anthologists and the meal-ticket of parodists, now it stands in almost Biblical dignity. No wildest flurry of contemporary censorship has dared to propose any mincing of its astounding meat. Its blurtings are accepted like those of the Old Testament. I suppose the pained moralist feels as he does of the deplorabilia of Israel, that they are unpardonable but that somehow the author meant well. Then there are still others, the intellectuals and

enthusiasts such as Swinburne who, after fierce espousal, recanted and cried that Whitman's muse was a "Hottentot wench under the influence of cantharides and adulterated rum." But, in its seventieth year, *Leaves of Grass* really begins to be absorbed into the actual tissue of American life. Whitman's reputation begins to be a business asset. They have named the new hotel in Camden, N. J., the Walt Whitman, and the Camden Chamber of Commerce has issued a leaflet about him.

In that great book not the least important thing was the densely typed Preface, which unaccountably disappeared from so many printings and is at last restored—"unboulderized," as a publisher friend of mine says—in Professor Emory Holloway's Inclusive Edition of the Leaves. For surely that magnificent outburst, essential to any reasonable notion of what Walt was about, is one of the most precious documents in American ink. How is it that Emerson's *Fortune of the Republic* and *Young American* and *American Scholar* have so long been nuggets in the curriculum, Required Reading for College Entrance, etc., and this glorious rocket fired from behind Doctor Beecher's church remains so little known? I swear that Brooklyn Heights rise as tall as Beacon Hill in my orography.

I can only conjecture that the 1855 Preface

sank from sight because it was so astoundingly beautiful. It contains one tedious excursion into mere catalogue, one rather vehement unchastity of phrase, and a needless punctuation of dots which gives a wrong impression that abominable impudences have been excised. Two minutes with blue chalk medicine these, and there remains a masterpiece of noble prose, musical as Pater, freshly and oddly phrased, thrillingly imagined. Emerson may well have rubbed his eyes: it is like the perfect essay that he himself must have dreamed of doing, a theme flowing of its own shining sluice rather than a canny compost of gnomes. But this delicate dignity in prose was so unlike what the wild buffalo notion of Walt demanded, no wonder it was presently stowed in the lazarette.

And who indeed was this Walter Whitman, bearded like the camerado, this mixture of William Blake and Sylvanus Stall? Of the less interesting days of his life we have almost stenographic report; but of the crucial times there is mostly silence and damned little of that. No biographer could salt that strong bird on pinions free until paralysis had crippled him. Our unquestionable facts can almost be summed in a paragraph. He was the son of a Long Island carpenter and builder (a quick-tempered melancholy man with Quaker leanings) and a placid sweet-minded pink-cheeked

mother. Of his many brothers and sisters at least two were feeble-minded or epileptic. He grew up in Brooklyn, then about the size of Hempstead to-day, say seven thousand inhabitants. He left school at thirteen, ran errands for a lawyer, learned to set type, read Walter Scott. Big, dreamy, and loutish, after some country school-teaching round Long Island and some healthy work as a rural newspaper manager, he became that most dangerous character, an itinerant editorial writer. Some very special poison evidently got into his veins about this time, for there is testimony that while doing miscellaneous chit-chat for rather smart sheets in New York he wore a high hat, carried a cane, and always flowers in his buttonhole. The high hat I do not yet altogether believe. That his temperance novelette was composed mostly in the reading room of Tammany Hall with gin cocktails for support is more credible; but he was always temperate with liquor. Among the rowdies at Pfaff's he was remarked as "never tipsy and never broke." A great deal (not all) that he wrote for publication in his twenties was unimportant. But probably this experience of turning off half-baked notions about almost anything taught him a secret respect for ideas. He did not take his newspaper work too seriously, for he was always ready to leave the office for a swim. One evening, between the acts

at a theatre, after a drink, he was offered a job in New Orleans. He accepted, and in New Orleans something happened. No one knows just what, but the delightful Bazalgette, his French biographer and translator, says, "I am inclined to think she was a Frenchwoman." Those who have persuaded themselves that the brief New Orleans interlude was a Paphian orgy must reckon with the fact that he had with him his fifteen-year-old brother Jeff, to whom he was devoted But when Walt returned North a few months later he had mysteriously changed. His beard was growing gray, he wanted to give public lectures, and he became, briefly, a realtor in rapidly growing Brooklyn. Inward, according to the current theory, some fiercening sanity was uncoiling. He bought little notebooks and began to put down, not editorials, but what he really was thinking. In these extraordinary jottings were the seeds of *Leaves of Grass*.

The old gang at Pfaff's must have been staggered by the *Leaves of Grass* preface; this was no genial paragraphing, this was that dangerous combustible known as literature. There is some characteristic Waltian humbug in it; Walt was not always at his best in "tallying" the peculiar virtues of Americans, for how much did he know of other nations? When he extols American beards, "amativeness," and "deathless attachment to freedom," we feel the torsion of a faintly grieving

grin: we know that the French, for example, can outdo us in all three. Moreover, it is only the highbrows (in any land) who care for freedom; the "common people," whom Walt relies on, detest and fear it. But even his little infusion of twaddle is delicious and unawares. When he warms to his high theme he is superb. Tell me any American document that is more gorgeous.

"America does not repel the past." . . . From the first phrase it startles attention like a shout at midnight. Instantly, in that strange opening sentence, the reader feels the spell of impending greatnesses. If at all sensitive to moods and tones, he discerns a voice speaking as one having authority. He is toled on in a tightening suspension of thought. The whole essay is a subpœna to every faculty that deals with high affairs.

There are happy moments when a mind moves in a wider swing than usual, and touches upon shining boundaries. In this manifesto, as in one greater still but not wholly dissimilar, a certain pamphlet on *The Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*, thought long brooded had "got the power within me to a passion." When that happens, "facts are showered over with light." I mention Milton's noble polemic by calculation; not indeed to suggest any comparison, which would be silly; but in the hope of startling a few zealots of literature into the thought that their almost complete disregard

of this Whitman fragment neglects something of very great importance. Among the general run of teachers of "English," who can tell you all about Matthew Arnold's Sweetness and Light, it is hard to find one who even knows of the existence of the 1855 Preface. The other day I saw a publisher's announcement of a professorial work on *The Function and Mechanism of a Sentence.* I may be very unfair, for I haven't read that book; yet I am tempted to wish that such treatises might be put under a penal ban, and that teachers would turn their eyes to such unconsidered richness as Whitman's prose. Perhaps they have imagined that the latter does not give sufficient opportunity for footnotes and learned comment. Then let them annotate the tremendous music of the 1855 Preface. Let them prepare a thesis on Whitman's habit of coming down, in grave easing cadence, on some strong barytone monosyllable to bring his period to a restful close. In more than half of the magnificent paragraphs of this Preface he does so; when he does not, there is an equally good reason for his leaving the voice in movement upward. Anyone who had taken the trouble to read the Preface must have seen that Whitman's poems were not mere bundles of words negligently amassed. His prosody was not random; there were certain rhythms natural to his pulse. Such effects as the ocean-roll of participles in "Out of the Cradle

Endlessly Rocking" are perhaps too familiar to indicate; but examine, in this Preface, the musical diminuendo he employs to close his paragraphs. A few examples of his sentence-ends will show that he was not merely writing: he was composing:

> ignorance or weakness or sin.
> impossible or baseless or vague.
> confusion or jostling or jam.
> and shall never be quiet again.
> be discharged from that part of the earth.
> whose instinct hated the truth.
> and look in the mirror with me.
> of assault outside of their own.
> and stands them again on their feet.
> of nature and passion and death.
> or sheltered fatness and ease.

The man whose thought fell into such sweet division had medicine in his rhetoric and chiming in his blood.

Such comments are jejune. "Without effort and without exposing in the least how it is done the greatest poet brings the spirit of all events and passions to bear on your individual character as you read." So let us not try to "expose how it is done." What is important is that here are "incomparable things said incomparably well," as Emerson wrote in the famous letter. Walt, "signing for soul and body," hit upon some of the

great truths about poetry; you will find them there if you are interested in that sort of thing. Will the years to come "make willing detours to the right hand and the left hand for his sake"? They have already done so. A voice like the 1855 Preface honours the very types that bring it to paper. Whitman's joy and cruelty and despair pass strangely from heart to heart. William Rose Benét wrote a poem some years ago that I think is not widely known:

AFTER HEARING JOHN COWPER POWYS LECTURE ON WALT WHITMAN

The littleness of Man made great,
The shattering seals, the bursting gate,
The taste of iron, the wells of mirth,
The winds of heaven, the salt of earth,
The thunderous and triumphal sea
Locked in one soul's integrity.

O single spirit, piercing word
Across what wild dark waters heard—
Secret, inviolate, fiery sense,
Troubling the stars' magnificence!

But it takes time to cross wild dark waters. Even Emerson lost heart. In May, 1856, he wrote to Carlyle that he had not sent him *Leaves of Grass* because "the book throve so badly with the few to whom I showed it." He added that if

it seemed to Tammas only "an auctioneer's inventory" he might use the book to light his pipe.

And the 1855 Preface, so long smuggled away (perhaps because it damaged the theory of the untutored child of Adam) remains the real miracle. If it existed in manuscript I'd vote for it as the most exciting sheaf of handwriting this country has penned. Not from a green college cloister, nor from the editorial rooms of some reputable publisher, but from that small printer's shack at Fulton and Cranberry streets came this proud statement of the importance of being a poet. Preceding poems that seemed so incredibly personal, it was perfect in anonymous dignity. With admirable judgment Walt kept his own first person singular out of it altogether. Whatever his private qualms (we know that he had many), in this Preface Walt did not argue. He was simply telling us. He had made up his mind to abandon any bid for the "soft eulogies, big money returns, usual rewards." He was "a candidate for the future." Of course, he would not have been Walt, rich mixture of shrewdness and simple craft, if he hadn't gone on digging for what rewards were possible just the same. I suppose no writer was ever so busy composing blurbs for himself, writing notices of his own books and ingeniously getting them into print. But that is irrelevant. It is not surprising that in the first few lines of that

Preface we encounter so hodiernal a phrase as "broadcast doings day and night." It might be a slogan line for the radio department of this evening's newspaper. He "flooded himself with the immediate age," and took the protective colour of Time itself. In those queer paragraphs a lonely and massive mind comes marching to the appointed closes of thought, with such manly tread that the reader's breath pauses in tune. There are words naïve, there are words arrogant, but there is also one pure undeniable: the thing will be hard to kill. Standing at the composing case in Cranberry Street, our Orson of the Muse (as Meredith called him a little hastily) spoke as only some dozen or so have spoken about poetry. He spoke as Sidney and Ben Jonson and Wordsworth and Shelley and Arnold have spoken. The greatnesses were in conjunction. The time straying toward infidelity he withheld by his steady faith. "Folks expect of the poet to indicate the path between reality and their souls."

Perhaps the time is coming when students of literature will study and cherish the 1855 Preface as a matter of course. One thing that is still really needed is a sort of Whitman primer, a kind of shock absorber or snubber to make the great vehicle easier riding for soft passengers. I think there are still many who have no inkling of the amazing musical effects in the Whitman orchestra.

Consider the lovely cunning of that first stanza in the "Song of the Broad-Axe," playing on four variations of one vowel sound:

Weapon shapely, naked, wan,
Head from the mother's bowels drawn,
Wooded flesh and metal bone, limb only one and lip only one,
Gray-blue leaf by red-heat grown, helve produced from a little seed sown,
Resting the grass amid and upon
To be lean'd and to lean on.

It was Edmund Gosse who said in his admirable essay that reading Whitman was like going camping in the wilds; the hiker must take his own conveniences with him. It would be a fascinating task to compile a kind of Whitman Scouting Kit, a knapsack of the forest lore necessary for a reader to make himself comfortable in that National Park. There are briars and rattlesnakes in the underbrush; there are thickets of tinder where a careless spark can set whole acres ablaze. There is calamus root, carminative and tonic only in cautious nibbles. But when you know your trails there is no better camping; there are, in the prayer book's great phrase, those things requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul.

But in any case, before one proceeds to what

Walt humorously called his "endless announcements," I think it only fair that he should read the messages that Walt intended to go with them. They are as important in American literature as the Gettysburg speech in American history.

AN OXFORD SYMBOL

WHEN in October, 1910, we arrived, in a hansom, at the sombre gate of New College, Oxford; trod for the first time through that most impressive of all college doorways, hidden in its walled and winding lane; timidly accosted Old Churchill, the whiskered porter, most dignitarian and genteel of England's Perfect Servants; and had our novice glimpse of that noble Front Quad where the shadow of the battlemented roof lies patterned across the turf—we were as innocently hopeful, modestly anxious for learning and eager to do the right thing in this strange, thrilling environment as ever any young American who went looking for windmills. No human being (shrewd observers have marked) is more beautifully solemn than the ambitious Young American. And, indeed, no writer has ever attempted to analyze the shimmering tissue of inchoate excitement and foreboding that fills the spirit of the juvenile Rhodes Scholar as he first enters his Oxford college. He arrives with his mind a gentle confusion of hearsay about Walter Pater,

Shelley, boat races, Mr. Gladstone, Tom Brown, the Scholar Gypsy, and little Mr. Bouncer. Kansas City or Sheboygan indeed seem far away as he crosses those quadrangles looking for his rooms.

But even Oxford, one was perhaps relieved to find, is not all silver-gray mediæval loveliness. The New Buildings, to which Churchill directed us, reached through a tunnel and a bastion in a rampart not much less than a thousand years elderly, were recognizably of the Rutherford B. Hayes type of edification. Except for the look-off upon gray walls, pinnacles, and a green tracery of gardens, and the calculated absence of plumbing (a planned method of preserving monastic hardiness among light-minded youth), the immense cliff of New Buildings might well have been a lobe of the old Johns Hopkins or a New York theological seminary. At the top of four flights we found our pensive citadel. Papered in blue, upholstered in a gruesome red, with yellow woodwork, and a fireplace which (we soon learned) was a potent reeker. It would be cheerful to describe those two rooms in detail, for we lived in them two years. But what first caught our eye was a little green pamphlet lying on the red baize tablecloth. It was lettered

NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD
Information and Regulations
Revised October, 1910

Our name was written upon it in ink, and we immediately sat down to study it. Here, we thought, is our passkey to this new world of loveliness.

First we found the hours of college chapel. Then, "All Undergraduates are required to perform Exercises." In our simplicity we at first supposed this to be something in the way of compulsory athletics, but then discovered it to mean intellectual exercises. Fair enough, we thought. That is what we came for.

"Undergraduates are required, as a general rule, to be in College or their Lodgings by 11 P. M., and to send their Strangers out before that time. . . . No Undergraduate is allowed to play on any musical instrument in College rooms except between the hours of 1 and 9 P. M., unless special leave has been obtained beforehand from the Dean. . . . No games are allowed in the College Quadrangles, and no games except bowls in the Garden." Excellent, we meditated; this is going to be a serious career, full attention to the delights of the mind and no interruption by corybantic triflers.

"A Term by residence means pernoctation within the University for six weeks in Michaelmas or in Hilary Term, and for three weeks in Easter or in Trinity (or Act) Term." . . . We felt a little uncertain as to just what time of year Hilary and

Act happened. But we were not halting, just now, over technicalities. We wanted to imbibe, hastily, the general spirit and flavour of our new home. . . . "Every member of the College is required to deposit Caution-money. Commoners deposit £30, unless they signify in writing their intention to pay their current Battels weekly; in this case they deposit £10. An undergraduate battling terminally cannot withdraw part of his Caution-money and become a weekly battler without the authority of his parent or guardian." We at once decided that it was best to be a weekly battler. Battling, incidentally, is a word that we believe exists only at Eton and Oxford; dictionaries tell us that it comes from "an obsolete verb meaning to fatten." Sometimes, however, in dispute with the Junior Bursar, it comes near its more usual sense. We wondered, in our young American pride, whether we were a Commoner? We were pleased to note, however, that the alternative classification was not a Lord but a Scholar.

We skimmed along through various other instructions. "A fine of 1s. is charged to the owner of any bicycle not put away before midnight." The owner, or the bicycle, we mused? Never mind —we would soon learn. Coals and faggots, we noted, were variable in price. "The charge for a cold bath is 2d., for a hot 4d., inclusive of bath-towel." The duties of a mysterious person named

as the Bedmaker (but always, in actual speech, the Scout) were punctually outlined. But now we found ourself coming to Kitchen, Buttery, and Store-Room Tariffs. This, evidently, was the pulse of the machine. With beating heart we read on, entranced:

Beer, Mild	half-pint	1½
Beer, Mixed	"	2
Beer, Strong	"	2½
Beer, Treble X	glass	3
Beer, Lager	pint	6
Stout	half-pint	2
Cider	"	1½

There was something significant, we felt by instinct, in the fact that Treble X was obtainable only by the glass. Vital stuff, evidently. Our education was going to come partly in casks, perhaps? In the Kitchen Tariff we read, gloatingly, magnificent syllables. *Grilled Sausages and Bacon*, commons, 1/2. *Devilled Kidneys*, commons, 1/. (A "commons," we judged, was a large portion; if you wanted a lesser serving, you ordered a "small commons.") *Chop with Chips*, 11d. *Grilled Bones*, 10d. *Kedgeree*, plain or curried, commons, 9d. (Oh noble kedgeree, so nourishing and inexpensive, when shall we taste your like again?) Herrings, Bloaters, Kippers, each 3d. (To think that, then, we thought the Junior Bursar's tariff

was a bit steep.) Jelly, Compôte of Fruit, Trifle, Pears and Cream. Creams . . . commons, 6d. "Gentlemen's own birds cooked and served . . . one bird, 1/. Two birds, 1/6."

We went on, with enlarging appreciation, to the Store Room and Cellar Tariffs: Syphons, Seltzer or Soda-water, 4½d. Ginger-beer, per bottle, 2d. Cakes: Genoa, Cambridge, Madeira, Milan, Sandringham, School, each 1/. Foolscap, per quire, 10d. Quill Pens, per bundle, 1/6. Cheroots, Cigars, Tobacco, Cigarettes—and then we found what seemed to be the crown and cream of our education, LIST OF WINES.

Port, 4/ per bottle. Pale Sherry, 3/. Marsala, 2/. Madeira, 4/. Clarets: Bordeaux 1/6. St. Julien, 2/. Dessert 4/. Hock or Rhenish Wine: Marcobrunner, 4/. Niersteiner, 3/. Moselle, 2/6. Burgundy, 2/ and 4/. Pale Brandy, 5/. Scotch Whiskey, 4/. Irish Whiskey, 4/. Gin, 3/. Rum, 4/.

It is really too bad to have to compress into a few paragraphs such a wealth of dreams and memories. We sat there, with our little pamphlet before us, and looked out at that great panorama of spires and towers. We have always believed in falling in with our environment. The first thing we did that afternoon was to go out and buy a corkscrew. We have it still—our symbol of an Oxford education.

SCAPEGOATS

THE man who did most (I am secretly convinced) to deprive American literature of some really fine stuff was Mr. John Wanamaker. It was in his store, some years ago, that I bought a kind of cot-bed or couch, which I put in one corner of my workroom and on which it is my miserable habit to recline when I might be getting at those magnificent writings I have planned. Every evening I pile up the cushions and nestle there with *The Gentle Grafter* or some detective story (my favourite relaxation), saying to myself: "Just ten minutes of loafing". . . .

But perhaps Messrs. Strawbridge and Clothier (also of Philadelphia) are equally at fault. When I wake up, on my Wanamaker divan, it is usually about 2 A. M. Not too late, even then, for a determined spirit to make incision on its tasks. But I find myself moving towards a very fine white-enamelled icebox which I bought from Strawbridge and Clothier in 1918. With that happy faculty of self-persuasion I convince myself it is only to see whether the pan needs emptying or the doors

latching. But by the time I have scalped a blackberry pie and eroded a platter of cold macaroni *au gratin*, of course work of any sort is out of the question.

So do the Philistines of this world league themselves cruelly against the artist, plotting temptation for his carnal deboshed instincts, joying to see him succumb. Once the habit of yielding is established, Wanamaker, Strawbridge and Clothier (dark trio of Norns) have it their own way. Just as surely as robins will be found on a newmown lawn, as certainly as bonfire smoke veers all round the brush pile to find out the eyes of the suburban leaf burner, so inevitably do the Divan and the Icebox exert their cruel dominion over us when we ought to be pursuing our lovely and impossible dreams. Wanamaker and Strawbridge and Clothier have blue-prints of the lines of fissure in our frail velleity. As William Blake might have said:

> Let Flesh once get a lead on Spirit,
> It's hard for Soul to reinherit;
> When supper's laid upon a plate
> Mind might as well abdicate.

But one of the things I think about, just before I drop off to sleep on that couch, is My Anthology. Like every one else, I have always had an ambition to compile an anthology of my own; several,

in fact. One of them I call in my mind *The Book of Uncommon Prayer*, and imagine it as a kind of secular breviary, including many of those beautiful passages in literature expressing the spirit of supplication. This book, however, it will take years to collect; it will be entirely non-sectarian and so truly religious that many people will be annoyed. People do not care much for books of real beauty. That anthology edited by Robert Bridges, for instance—*The Spirit of Man*—how many readers have taken the trouble to hunt it out?

But the *Uncommon Prayer Book* is not the kind of anthology I have in mind at the moment. What I need is a book that would boil down the best of all the books I am fond of and condense it into a little bouillon cube of wisdom. I have always had in mind the possibility that I might go travelling, or the house might burn down, or I might have to sell my library, or something of that sort. I should like to have the meat and essence of my favourites in permanent form, so that wherever I were I could write to the publisher and get a fresh copy.

This thought came with renewed emphasis the other day when I was talking to Vachel Lindsay. He was saying that he had lately been rereading Swinburne, for the first time in nearly twenty years, and was grieved to see how the text of the poet had become corrupted in his memory. He had

been misquoting Swinburne for years and years, he said, and the errors had been growing more and more firmly into his mind. That led me to think, suppose we had only memory to rely on, how long would the text of anything we loved remain unblurred? Suppose I were on a desert island and yearned to solace myself by spouting some of the sonnets of Shakespeare? How much could I recapture? Honestly, now, and with no resort to the book on the shelf at my elbow, let me try an old friend:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
That alters when it alteration finds
Or bends with the remover to remove.
Oh no, it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken—
Love is the star to every wandering bark
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Then here's something about a sickle, but I can't for the life of me quite get it. Presently I'll look it up in the book and see how near I came.

Before opening the Shakespeare, however, let's have one more try:

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I wail the lack of many a thing I sought
. . . my dear time's waste——

And all the rest of that sonnet that I can think of is something about "death's dateless night." A pretty poor showing. Of course, I should do better on a desert island: there would be the wide expanse of shining sand to walk upon, and I could throw myself into it with more passion and fury. The secret of remembering poetry is to get a good barytone start and obliterate the mind of its current freight of trifles. The metronomic prosody of the surf would help me, no doubt, and the placid frondage of the breadfruit trees. But even so, the recension of Shakespeare's sonnets that I would write down upon slips of bark would be a very corrupt and stumbling text. Favourite lines would be scrambled into the wrong sonnets, and the whole thing would be a pitiful miscarriage of memory.

The only sagacious conduct of life is to prepare for every possible emergency. I have taken out life insurance, and fire insurance, and burglary insurance, and automobile insurance. I have always insured myself against losing my job by taking care not to work too hard at it, so I wouldn't miss it too bitterly if it were suddenly jerked from under me. But what have I done in the way of Literary Insurance? Suppose, tomorrow, Adventure should carry me away from these bookshelves? How pleasant to have a little microcosm of them that I could take with me!

And yet, unless I can shake off the servitude of those three Philadelphia mandarins, Wanamaker and Strawbridge and Clothier, I shall never have it.

When I think of the plays that I would have written if it weren't for those three rascals. . . .

TO A NEW YORKER A HUNDRED YEARS HENCE

I WONDER, old dear, why my mind has lately been going out towards you? I wonder if you will ever read this? They say that wood-pulp paper doesn't last long nowadays. But perhaps some of my grandchildren (with any luck, there should be some born, say twenty-five years hence) may, in their years of tottering caducity, come across this scrap of greeting, yellowed with age. With tenderly cynical waggings of their faded polls, perhaps they will think back to the tradition of the quaint vanished creatures who lived and strove in this city in the year of disgrace, 1921. Poor old granfer (I can hear them say it, with that pleasing note of pity), I can just remember how he used to prate about the heyday of his youth. He wrote pieces for some paper, didn't he? Comically old-fashioned stuff my governor said; some day I must go to the library and see if they have any record of it.

You seem a long way off, this soft September morning, as I sit here and sneeze (will hay fever still

exist in 2021, I wonder?) and listen to the chime of St. Paul's ring eleven. Just south of St. Paul's brown spire the girders of a great building are going up. Will that building be there when you read this? What will be the Olympian skyline of your city? Will poor old Columbia University be so far downtown that you will be raising money to move it out of the congested slums of Morningside? Will you look up, as I do now, to the great pale shaft of Woolworth; to the golden boy with wings above Fulton Street? What ships with new names will come slowly and grandly up your harbour? What new green spaces will your street children enjoy? But something of the city we now love will still abide, I hope, to link our days with yours. There is little true glory in a city that is always changing. New stones, new steeples are comely things; but the human heart clings to places that hold association and reminiscence. That, I suppose, is the obscure cause of this queer feeling that impels me to send you so perishable a message. It is the precious unity of mankind in all ages, the compassion and love felt by the understanding spirit for those, its resting kinsmen, who once were glad and miserable in these same scenes. It keeps one aware of that marvellous dark river of human life that runs, down and down uncountably, to the unexplored seas of Time.

You seem a long way off, I say—and yet it is but

an instant, and you will be here. Do you know that feeling, I wonder (so characteristic of our city) that a man has in an elevator bound (let us say) for the eighteenth floor? He sees 5 and 6 and 7 flit by, and he wonders how he can ever live through the interminable time that must elapse before he will get to his stopping place and be about the task of the moment. It is only a few seconds, but his mind can evolve a whole honeycomb of mysteries in that flash of dragging time. Then the door slides open before him and that instantaneous eternity is gone; he is in a new era. So it is with the race. Even while we try to analyze our present curiosities, they whiff away and disperse. Before we have time to turn three times in our chairs, we shall be the grandparents and you will be smiling at our old-fashioned sentiments.

But we ask you to look kindly on this our city of wonder, the city of amazing beauties which is also (to any man of quick imagination) an actual hell of haste, din, and dishevelment. Perhaps you by this time will have brought back something of that serenity, that reverence for thoughtful things, which our generation lost—and hardly knew it had lost. But even Hell, you must admit, has always had its patriots. There is nothing that hasn't—which is one of the most charming oddities of the race.

And how we loved this strange, mad city of

ours, which we knew in our hearts was, to the clear eye of reason and the pure, sane vision of poetry, a bedlam of magical impertinence, a blind byway of monstrous wretchedness. And yet the blacker it seemed to the lamp of the spirit, the more we loved it with the troubled eye of flesh. For humanity, immortal only in misery and mockery, loves the very tangles in which it has enmeshed itself: with good reason, for they are the mark and sign of its being. So you will fail, as we have; and you will laugh, as we have—but not so heartily, we insist; no one has ever laughed the way your tremulous granfers did, old chap! And you will go on about your business, as we did, and be just as certain that you and your concerns are the very climax of human gravity and worth. And will it be any pleasure to you to know that on a soft September morning a hundred years ago your affectionate great-grandsire looked cheerfully out of his lofty kennel window, blew a whiff of smoke, smiled a trifle gravely upon the familiar panorama, knew (with that antique shrewdness of his) a hawk from a handsaw, and then went out to lunch?

A CALL FOR THE AUTHOR

BUT who will write me the book about New York that I desire? The more I think about it, the more astonished I am that no one attempts it. I don't mean a novel. I would not admit any plot or woven tissue of story to come between the reader and my royal heroine, the City herself. Not to be a coward, should I try to write it myself? It is my secret dream; but, better, it should be written by some sturdy rogue of a bachelor, footfree, living in the very heart of the uproar. Some fellow with a taste and nuance for the vulgar and vivid; a consort of both parsons and bootleggers; a *Beggar's Opera* kind of rascal. I can think of three men in this city who have magnificent powers for such a book; but they are getting perhaps a little elderly—yes, they are over forty! Ginger must be very hot in the mouth of my imagined author. He must be young (dashed if I don't think about 32 is the ideal age to write such a book), but not one of the Extremely Brilliant Young Men. They are too clever; and they are not lonely enough. For this is a lonely job. It's got to

be done *solus*, slowly, with an eye only upon the subject. It has got to show the very tremble and savour of life itself.

The man who will write this book will not necessarily enjoy it. To get into the secret of Herself he has got to have a peculiar feeling about her. For years he must have wrestled with her almost as a personal antagonist. He must have vowed, since he first saw her imperial skyline serrated on blue, to make her his own; a mistress worthy of him, and yet he himself her master. But he must know, in his inward, that in the end she triumphs, she tramples down mind and heart and nerve. Loveliest enemy in the world, implacable victor over reason and peace and all the quieter sanities of the spirit, her mad, intolerable beauty crazes or silences the sensitive mind that woos her. If you think this is only fine writing and romantic tall-talk, then you know her only with the eye, not with the imagination. With good reason, perhaps, her poets have, for the most part, kept mum. Enough for them to see and cherish in imagination her little sudden glimpses. A girl, slender, gayly unconscious of admiration, poises on one foot at the edge of the subway platform, leaning over to see if the train is coming. That gallant figure is perhaps something of a symbol of the city's own soul.

There must be many who feel about Herself

as I do—and, more wisely, are tacit. There are many whose minds have trembled on the steep sills of truth, have felt that golden tremble of reality almost within touch, and rather than mar the half-apprehended fable, have turned troubled away. But there is such poetry in her, and such fine, glorious animal gusto—why is there not some determined attempt to set it down, not with "rhetoricating floscules," but as it is? Day after day one comes to the attack; and returning, as the sloping sunlight and fresh country air flood the dusty red plush of the homeward smoking-car, readmits the expected defeat. Here is a target for you, O generation of snipers. Let us have done with pribbles and prabbles. Who is the man who will write me the book I crave—that vulgar, jocund, carnal, beautiful, rueful book!

SIR KENELM DIGBY

Sir Kenelm Digby, of whose acquaintance all his contemporaries seem to have been ambitious.

—Dr. Johnson, *Life of Cowley*.

PROHIBITION, I dare say, is going to make fashionable the private compilation of just such delightful works as *The Closet of the Eminently Learned Sir Kenelme Digbie Opened; London, at the Star in Little Britain, 1669.* Sir Kenelm, "the friend of kings and the special friend of queens," crony of such diverse spirits as Bacon, Ben Jonson, and Oliver Cromwell, kept this notebook of his jocund experiments in home brewing and cookery. Just as nowadays a man will jot down the formula of some friend's shining success in the matter of domestic chianti, so did the admirable Kenelm record "Sir Thomas Gower's Metheglin for Health," or "My Lord Hollis' Hydromel," or "Sir John Colladon's Oat-Meal Pap," or "My Lady Diana Porter's Scotch Collops"; and adding, of course, his own particular triumphs—e.g., "Hydromel as I Made it Weak

for the Queen Mother," "A Good Quaking Bag-Pudding," and "To Fatten Young Chickens in a Wonderful Degree." Sir Kenelm's official duty at the court of Charles the First was Gentleman of the Bed-chamber; but if I had been Charles, I should have transferred him to the Pantry.

The *Closet Opened* (which was not published until after Sir Kenelm's death; he was born 1603, died 1665) is the kind of book delightfully apt for the sad, sagacious, and solitary, for one cannot spend an hour in it without deriving a lively sense of the opulence and soundness of life. The affectionate attention Sir Kenelm pays the raisin makes him seem almost a Volsteadian figure: in his pages that excellent and powerful fruity capsule plays, perhaps for the first time in history, a heroic and leading rôle. Consider this:

TO MAKE ALE DRINK QUICK

When small Ale hath wrought sufficiently, draw into bottles; but first put into every bottle twelve good raisins of the Sun split and stoned. Then stop up the bottle close and set it in sand (gravel) or a cold dry Cellar. After a while this will drink exceedingly quick and pleasant. Likewise take six Wheat-corns, and bruise them, and put into a bottle of Ale; it will make it exceeding quick and stronger.

Kenelm was not only a good eater; he was a devilish good writer. The fine lusty root of English

prose was in him. If this is not true literature, we know it not:

ANOTHER CLOUTED CREAM

Milk your Cows in the evening about the ordinary hour, and fill with it a little Kettle about three quarters full, so that there may be happily two or three Gallons of Milk. Let this stand thus five or six hours. About twelve a Clock at night kindle a good fire of Charcoal, and set a large Trivet over it. When the fire is very clear and quick, and free from all smoak, set your Kettle of Milk over it upon the Trivet, and have in a pot by a quart of good Cream ready to put in at the due time; which must be, when you see the Milk begin to boil simpringly. Then pour in the Cream in a little stream and low, upon a place, where you see the milk simper. . .

To simper—a word of sheer genius! There are many such in his recipes.

We find the raisin again at work in his directions:

TO MAKE EXCELLENT MEATHE

To every quart of Honey, take four quarts of water. Put your water in a clean Kettle over the fire, and with a stick take the just measure, how high the water cometh, making a notch, where the superficies toucheth the stick. As soon as the water is warm, put in your Honey, and let it boil, skiming it always, till it be very clean; Then put to every Gallon of water, one pound of the best Blew-raisins of the Sun, first clean picked from the stalks, and clean washed. Let them remain in

the boiling Liquor, till they be throughly swollen and soft; Then take them out, and put them into a Hair-bag, and strain all the juice and pulp and substance from them in an Apothecaries Press; which put back into your liquor, and let it boil, till it be consumed just to the notch you took at first, for the measure of your water alone. Then let your Liquor run through a Hair-strainer into an empty Woodden-fat, which must stand endwise, with the head of the upper-end out; and there let it remain till the next day, that the liquor be quite cold. Then Tun it up into a good Barrel, not filled quite full, and let the bung remain open for six weeks. Then stop it up close, and drink not of it till after nine months.

This Meathe is singularly good for a Consumption, Stone, Gravel, Weak-sight, and many more things. A Chief Burgomaster of Antwerpe, used for many years to drink no other drink but this; at Meals and all times, even for pledging of healths. And though He were an old man he was of an extraordinary vigor every way, and had every year a Child, had always a great appetite and good digestion; and yet was not fat.

One of good Sir Kenelm's most famous instructions, which has become fairly well-known, does honour not only to his delicate taste but also to his religious devotion. It is his advice on the brewing of tea—"The water is to remain upon it no longer than whiles you can say the *Miserere* Psalm very leisurely." This advice occurs in the recipe

TEA WITH EGGS

The Jesuite that came from China, Ann. 1664, told Mr. Waller, That there they use sometimes in this manner. To near a pint of the infusion, take two yolks of new laid-eggs, and beat them very well with as much fine Sugar as is sufficient for this quantity of Liquor; when they are very well incorporated, pour your Tea upon the Eggs and Sugar, and stir them well together. So drink it hot. This is when you come home from attending business abroad, and are very hungry, and yet have not conveniency to eat presently a competent meal. This presently discusseth and satisfieth all rawness and indigence of the stomack, flyeth suddainly over the whole body and into the veins, and strengthenth exceedingly and preserves one a good while from necessity of eating. Mr. Waller findeth all those effects of it thus with Eggs. In these parts, He saith, we let the hot water remain too long soaking upon the Tea, which makes it extract into itself the earthy parts of the herb. The water is to remain upon it no longer than whiles you can say the *Miserere* Psalm very leisurely. Thus you have only the spiritual parts of the Tea, which is much more active, penetrative, and friendly to nature.

Sometimes, it is true, one suspects Sir Kenelm of a tendency to gild the lily. In the matter of perfuming his tobacco, this was his procedure:

Take Balm of Peru half an ounce, seven or eight Drops of Oyl of Cinamon, Oyl of Cloves five drops,

Oyl of Nutmegs, of Thyme, of Lavender, of Fennel, of Aniseeds (all drawn by distillation) of each a like quantity, or more or less as you like the Odour, and would have it strongest; incorporate with these half a dram of Ambergrease; make all these into a Paste; which keep in a Box; when you have fill'd your Pipe of Tobacco, put upon it about the bigness of a Pin's Head of this Composition.

It will make the Smoak most pleasantly odoriferous, both to the Takers, and to them that come into the Room; and ones Breath will be sweet all the day after. It also comforts the Head and Brains.

It is a great temptation to go on quoting these seductive formulæ. I feel sure that my tenderer readers would relish instructions for the Beautifying Water or Precious Cosmetick,—for the secret of which ladies of high degree pursued Sir Kenelm all over Europe. (He does not include in the *Closet* any details of the Viper Wine for the Complection which was said to have caused the death of Lady Digby—a rather painful scandal at the time.) But I fear to trespass on your patience. Let me only add that the ambition of the Three Hours for Lunch Club has long been to hold a DIGBY DINNER, at which all the dishes will be prepared as nearly as possible according to Sir Kenelm's prescriptions. The project offers various perplexities, and might even have to be consummated at sea, beyond the hundred-fathom curve. But if it ever

comes to pass, the following menu, carefully chosen from Sir Kenelm's delicacies, seems to me promising:

Portugal Broth, As It Was Made for the Queen
Sack with Clove Gillyflowers
Sucket of Mallow Stalks
A Herring Pye
A Smoothening Quiddany of Quinces
My Lady Diana Porter's Scotch Collops
Mead, from the Muscovian Ambassador's Steward
The Queen Mother's Hotchpot of Mutton
Pease of the Seedy Buds of Tulips
Boiled Rice in a Pipkin
Marmulate of Pippins
Dr. Bacon's Julep of Conserve of Red Roses
Excellent Spinage Pasties
Pleasant Cordial Tablets, Which Strengthen Nature
Small Ale for the Stone
A Nourishing Hachy
Plague Water
Marrow Sops with Wine
My Lord of Denbigh's Almond Marchpane
Sallet of Cold Capon Rosted
My Lady of Portland's Minced Pyes
The Liquor of Life
A Quaking Bag-Pudding
Metheglin for the Colic

But I must not mislead you into thinking that Sir Kenelm was merely a convivial trencherman.

His biography as related in the Encyclopædia Britannica is as diverting as a novel—more so than many. Infant prodigy, irresistible wooer, privateer, scientist, religious controversialist, astrologer, and a glorious talker, he made a profound impression on the life of his time. But, as so often happens, his name has been carried down to posterity not by the strange laborious treatise he regarded as his opus maximum, but by his chance association with one of the great books of all time. When Digby was under honourable confinement (as a "Popish recusant") at Winchester House, Southwark, in 1642, he was busy there with chemical experiment and the MS. of his *Of Bodies and Mans Soul* (of which more in a moment). Apparently they treated political prisoners with more indulgence in those days. One evening he received a letter from his friend the Earl of Dorset, urging him to read a book that was making a stir among the intellectuals. One may think it was perhaps a trifle niggardly of Dorset merely to have recommended the book. To a friend in jail, surely he might (and it was just before Christmas) have sent a copy as a present. But the liberality of the Earl is not to be called in question: he had made Sir Kenelm at least one startlingly gracious gift—viz. Lady Digby herself, previously Dorset's mistress. This oddly amusing story, or gossip, may be pursued in Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, a fascinat-

ing book (published by the Oxford Press)—a sort of Social Register of seventeenth century England.

"Late as it was" when Sir Kenelm received the letter from his benefactor and colleague, he sent out at once (mark the high spirit of the true inquirer; also the sagacity of seventeenth century booksellers, who kept open at night)—

> To let you see how the little needle of my Soul is throughly touched at the great Loadstone of yours, and followeth suddenly and strongly, which way soever you becken it. . . . I sent presently (as late as it was) to *Pauls* Church-yard, for this Favourite of yours, *Religio Medici:* which found me in a condition fit to receive a Blessing; for I was newly gotten into my Bed. This good natur'd creature I could easily perswade to be my Bed-fellow, and to wake with me, as long as I had any edge to entertain my self with the delights I sucked from so noble a conversation.

Rarely have the pleasures of reading in bed had such durable result. The following day he spent in pouring out a long, spirited and powerful letter to Dorset (75 printed pages) which has become famous as *Observations upon Religio Medici*, and a few years later was included as a supplement to that book—where it still remains in most editions. In this tumbling out of his honourable meditations and excitements, Sir Kenelm took issue pretty smartly with Dr. Browne on a number of points,

particularly in regard to his own special hobby of Immortality. He, just as much as the Norwich physician, loved to lose himself in an Altitudo; but in some cloudlands of airy doctrine Browne seemed to him too precise. "The dint of Wit," Digby remarked felicitously of some theological impasse, "is not forcible enough to dissect such tough matter."

These *Observations* are of more than casual importance. Dorset, apparently, took steps (unknown to Digby) to have them published; and report of this coming blast roused Browne to protest courteously against "animadversions" based upon the unauthorized and imperfect version of his book—his own "true and intended Originall" being by this time in the printer's hands. Digby had written his observations without knowing who the author of *Religio* was. The letters that now passed between him and Browne are an exhilarating model of controversy goldenly conducted between gentlemen of the grand manner. "You shall sufficiently honour me in the vouchsafe of your refute," writes Browne, "and I obliege the whole world in the occasion of your Pen." To which Digby, avowing that his comments were written without thought of print and merely as a "private exercitation," charmingly disclaims any ambition to enter public argument with so superior a scholar. "To encounter such a sinewy opposite,

or make Animadversions upon so smart a piece as yours is, requireth such a solid stock and exercise in school learning. My superficial besprinkling will serve only for a private letter, or a familiar discourse with Lady auditors. With longing I expect the coming abroad of the true copy of the Book, whose false and stoln one hath already given me so much delight." The delightful remark about lady auditors causes one to suspect that even in that day the germ of the lecture passion was moving in circles of high-spirited females.

Digby and Browne were evidently kinsprits. They were nearly of an age; Browne was a physician, and Digby—though many considered him a mountebank and charlatan—had a genuine scientific zeal for medical dabblings. His Powder of Sympathy, a nostrum for healing wounds at a distance, has been a cause of merriment among later generations; but Sir Kenelm was no fool and I am not at all sure that there wasn't much excellent sense in his procedure. The injury itself was washed and kept under a clean bandage. The Powder of Sympathy was to be prepared from a paste of vitriol, and the instructions included necessity for mixing and exposing it in sunshine. Sir Kenelm was quite aware of the public appetite for hocus-pocus, and surely there was a touch of anticipatory Christian Science and Coué in his idea of keeping the patient's mind off the trouble

and giving him this harmless amusement in the open air. For the sympathetic powder, please note, was never to be applied to the wound itself, but only to something carrying the blood of the injured person—a stained bandage, a garment, or even the weapon with which the damage was done. The injury was left to the curative progress of Nature. This theory of treating not the wound but the weapon might well be meditated by literary critics. For instance, when some toxicated energumen publishes an atrocious book, the best course to pursue is not to attack the author but to praise Walter de la Mare or Stella Benson. This may be termed the allopathic principle in criticism; but few of us are steadfast enough to adhere to it.

Digby's *Memoirs*—not published until 1827—exhibit him as the swashbuckler, and amorist by no means faint. They are amusing enough but give only a carnal silhouette. Perhaps he did not write the book himself: there is a vein of burlesque in the narrative that makes me suspicious. It purports to be an account of Sir Kenelm's fidelity to his wife, the lovely Venetia; and we are told that the account was written under Antonian pressure. Importuned by ladies of much personal generosity and recklessness, Sir Kenelm austerely retires to a cave and pens this confession of uxorious loyalty. When you consider that the relations of Sir Kenelm and Lady Venetia were

one of the fashionable uproars of the day, you begin to guess that the Memoir (in which all the characters are concealed by romantic pseudonyms) was an elaborate skit intended for private circulation, probably the work of some satirical friend. Exactly so, when any great scandal nowadays is riding on the front pages of the newspapers, do City Room reporters compose humorous burlesques of the printed "stories," and these have delightful currency round the office.

So you will still find legends in print suggesting that Sir Kenelm was a blend of Casanova and Dr. Munyon. He has been attributed what historians used to call "Froude's disease"—an insufficient curiosity as to the total of 2 and 2 when added together. But a man whose memory still makes a page and a half of the Encyclopædia Britannica such lively reading, must have had more than mere animal spirits in his make-up. It is easy to find testimony to his potent social and military accomplishments. But the man himself, his earnest scientific passions, his valiant speculation on human destinies, does not emerge from the entries in encyclopædias. For that you must look into his great book *Two Treatises: The Nature of Bodies, and The Nature of Mans Soul* (1658). By the kindness of Mr. Wilbur Macey Stone, generous and astonishingly Elizabethan explorer of old books, I have an original, tawny and most

aromatic copy of this queer treasure. The title page of the Second Treatise is endorsed, with a charming use of the aspirates—

SAMUEL MELLOR'S BOOK, December 22th 1792.

Samuel Mellor his my Name
and Cheshire is my Nation
and Burton is my Dwellings
Place and Christ is my
Salvation
this Book geven
has A Gift to Samuel Mellor

Sir Kenelm dedicates the volume to his son, in a touching and honourable letter dated "Paris the last of August 1644." "The calamity of this time" (he says) "hath bereft me of the ordinary means of expressing my affection to you; I have been casting about, to find some other way of doing that in such sort, as you may receive most profit by it. Therein I soon pitched upon these Considerations; that Parents owe unto their children, not only material subsistence for their Body, but much more, spiritual contributions to their better part, their Mind." Accordingly, with perfect gravity and that sombre and Latinized eloquence which was the peculiar gift of his century, he proceeds to expound in nearly 600 dense pages his observations on what we would call nowadays physics and psychology. It would be agreeable enough, if

I did not fear to weary you, to copy down some of Sir Kenelm's delightful shrewd comments. A few of his section headings will serve to give an idea of his matter. For instance:

The experience of burning glasses, and of soultry gloomy weather, prove light to be fire.

Philosophers ought not to judge of things by the rules of vulgar people.

The reason why the motion of light is not discerned coming towards us, and that there is some real tardity in it.

The true sense of the Maxim, that Nature abhorreth from vacuity.

The loadstone sendeth forth its emanations spherically. Which are of two kinds: and each kind is strongest in that hemisphere, through whose polary parts they issue out.

The reason why sometimes the same object appears through the prism in two places: and in one place more lively, in the other place more dim.

How the vital spirits sent from the brain, do run to the intended part of the body without mistake.

Of the rainbow, and how by the colour of any body, we may know the composition of the body it self.

How things renewed in the fantasie, return with the same circumstances that they had at first.

Why divers men hate some certain meats, and particularly cheese.

Here, you will agree, was a man who even when he seems naïf, examined phenomena with his own eyes and with notable sharpness. Delving into the

"crooked narrow cranies & restrayned flexuous rivolets of corporeal things" was, he insisted, a "difficult & spiny affaire"; he was eager to avoid "meer Chymeras and wild paradoxes," hoped that "by strong abstraction, and by deep retirement into the closet of judgment" he might win "a favourable doom" from his readers. There is no naïveté so dangerous as that of under-estimating the power of another man's mind. Behind some of his fanciful suggestions there is an astonishing agility of conjecture. On the subject of physiology he is delicious. Hear him (pared down to stark brevity) on the brain:

We may take notice that it containeth, towards the middle of its substance, four concavities, as some do count them: but in truth, these four, are but one great concavity, in which four, as it were, divers roomes, may be distinguished. . . . Now, two rooms of this great concavity, are divided by a little body, somewhat like a skin, (though more fryable) which of itself is clear; but there it is somewhat dimmed, by reason that hanging a little slack, it somewhat shriveleth together: and this, Anatomists do call *Septum lucidum*, or speculum. . . .

This part seemeth to me, to be that and onely that, in which the fansie or common sense resideth . . . it is seated in the very hollow of the brain; which of necessity must be the place and receptacle where the species and similitudes of things doe reside, and where they are moved and tumbled up and down, when we think

of many things. And lastly, the situation we put our head in, when we think earnestly of any thing, favoureth this opinion: for then we hang our head forwards, as it were forcing the specieses to settle towards our forehead, that from thence they may rebound, and work upon this diaphanous substance.

But it is in the Second Treatise (*Declaring the Nature and Operations of Mans Soul; out of which, The Immortality of Reasonable Souls, is Convinced*) that the darling man rises to really dazzling heights. In this mystical, ecstatic and penitential essay he (in Burton's phrase) rectifies his perturbations. He is no longer channeled in the "crooked narrow cranies of corporeal things"; he works from withinward and spirals in happy ether:

To thee then my soul, I now address my speech. For since by long debate, and toilsom rowing against the impetuous tides of ignorance, and false apprehensions, which overthrow thy banks, and hurry thee headlong down the stream, whiles thou art imprisoned in thy clayie mansion; we have with much ado arrived to aim at some little attome of thy vast greatness; and with the hard and tough blows of strict and wary reasoning, we have strucken out some few sparks of that glorious light, which invironeth and swelleth thee: it is high time, I should retire my self out of the turbulent and slippery field of eager strife and litigious disputation, to make my accounts with thee; where no outward noise may distract us, nor any way intermeddle between us, ex-

cepting onely that eternal verity, which by thee shineth upon my faint and gloomy eyes. . . . Existence is that which comprehendeth all things: and if God be not comprehended in it, thereby it is, that he is incomprehensible of us: and he is not comprehended in it, because himself is it. . . . Which way soever I look, I lose my sight, in seeing an infinity round about me: Length without points: Breadth without Lines: Depth without any surface. All content, all pleasure, all restless rest, all an unquietness and transport of delight, all an extasie of fruition.

So don't let any one tell you that Sir Kenelm was only a seventeenth century epicure and bootlegger.

IN HONOREM: MARTHA WASHINGTON

AN AMERICAN figure of national consequence has passed away from the scene of her many glories. We refer to Martha Washington, the Independence Hall cat.

When we worked in the old Philadelphia *Ledger* office, and paragraphs were scarce, we had an unfailing recourse. We would go over to the State House (as they call it in its home town), descend to the cool delightful old cellar underneath the hall, and call on Fred Eckersberg, the engineer. We would see Martha sleeking herself on the flagstones by the cellar steps (she was the blackest cat we ever knew, giving off an almost purple lustre in hot sunlight) or perhaps we would have to search her out among the coal bins where she was fixing a layette for the next batch of kittens. In any case, Martha having been duly admired, Fred Eckersberg would gladly talk about her and tell us what were the latest adventures of her historic life. Which was always good copy, for Fred, having been on friendly terms with Phila-

delphia reporters for many years, knew the kind of anecdotes that would please them. One of Fred's unconscious triumphs was the time he told us of his perplexity about ringing in the New Year in the Independence Hall belfry. It was about Christmas time, 1919. "Last January," he said, "I rang One-Nine-One-Nine to welcome in the New Year. But what am I going to do this time? How can I ring One-Nine-Two-Nought?" We told him we saw no way out of it but to start early in the afternoon of New Year's Eve and ring the whole One Thousand Nine Hundred and Twenty tolls.

We could say a good deal about Martha Washington: her kittens are surely the most noble in the land, charter members of the Colonial Felines of America, all born in the Hall, directly underneath the lobby where the Bell stands. When the most famous brood of all were swaddled, four fine jetty daughters born in November, 1918, Fred christened them Victory, Freedom, Liberty, and Independence. He paid us the greatest compliment of our life by offering us Victory, but at that time we were living in a small apartment in the city and we didn't think it would be a sufficiently dignified home for such a kitten, who deserved nothing less than a residence on the Main Line (Oh, Philadelphia!), with scrapple made on the premises.

But it is time to get down to the point of our

story. Martha has left the Hall. Poor Fred, in his bereavement, has taken pen in hand. We can see him, sitting at his desk down there in the ancient cellar, with all his emblems, souvenirs, and clippings posted up above him and an oblong of gold-and-green brightness shining down through the doorway from the leafy sunshine of the Square. We can see him talking it over with his comrades "the boys"—the State House carpenter and the gardeners, as they sit at their lunch in the cellar. There is the empty saucer, dry and dusty now; in the good old days Fred always brought in a little bottle of milk every morning for Martha. And this is what Fred writes us, word for word:

PHILA Aug 3, 21.

DEAR FRIEND: I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know that I am still at the Hall but the Black cat is gone—without a press agent Martha just became a cat the boys miss her as we had a bag of grass seed the mice got in and they have to hang their lunch on a string but we have a pair of Robbins that sing in the square they would not be long there if Martha was strolling around. We kept one of her kittens when I was on my vacation it was sent to the Morris Refuge with one of the men, on a Friday the next day he got a yellow slip (good bye). Lot of people ask me about her and a Friend of yours left this card: *Dear friend It looks as if Martha is going to have a family—Will you save me two kittens if they are black like their ma!* But she did not have a black kitten so he did not get one.

She left them for a few days came back when they were sent away this was what got her in wrong, but when a fight between two Thomas cats on the lawn was pulled off Martha's doom was sealed. She had the same sleek black coat the same bright eyes but she was in wrong with our Superintendant so I called up and had a boy from the cat home call for her they said it would cost 50 cents so I left the cents and the job of putting her in the basket to one of the men, but her picture is still on the wall.

We are making changes and repairs about the buildings if the tower would interest you would be pleased to take you up when over in Phila had a party from New York up and they said they knew you.

The old janitor lived in the tower because he had to ring the bell for fires funerals and most everything that went on they tell me one son was born there he had three children, the rafter alongside the open fireplace is burned and we found some old shoes worn by children under the floor, and some bones we thought ment a Crime but upon investigation turned out to be soup bones from Sheep Legs. This is about all. Your Friend

FRED ECKERSBERG
Engineer, Independence Hall.

ACCORDING TO HOYLE

IF IT be true" (remarks old John Mistletoe, in his little known *Life of Edmund Hoyle*) "that a happy life leaves behind it little material for the biographer, and only those whose careers have been marked by the pangs of ambition and the wearinesses of achievement offer maxims for the moralist, then there is little to be said of Edmund Hoyle. And yet it is odd that a man whose name has become proverbial, who lived to the age of close upon a century (1672–1769), and who standardized and codified the chief social amusement of his age into an etiquette which remained unchanged for six generations—it is odd, I say, that this great peaceful benefactor has left so slight a trace in biographical annals. For I ask you, which of Hoyle's contemporaries conferred a more placable and sedentary boon upon the world than he?"

"Hoyle" (continues Mr. Mistletoe) "was a man of very speechless humour. It was his wont to say that he had been lured into the study and metaphysic of whist because it was a silent game.

As is well known, the game was originally called *whisk;* it was Mr. Hoyle who, by his continual utterance of the imperative and hushing monosyllable *Whist!* when gaming with those whose tongues were apt to wag irrelevantly, caused the diversion, at first only in sport, and then in genuine earnest, to be rechristened. It was a sight not to be forgotten, by contemporary account, to see the Master (as he was known) sitting down at the Three Pigeons tavern for his afternoon rubber. The mornings he spent in tutoring wealthy ladies in the rudiments of the fashionable game, this being the chief source of his income. He was very particular, moreover, as to the standing and rank of his pupils; he was much in demand, and could afford to take only such students as satisfied his fastidious taste for youth and beauty. In fact, he anticipated the doctrine announced many years later by John Keats, who remarked, 'I intend henceforth to have nothing to do with the society of ladies unless they be handsome. You lose time to no purpose.'

"It was, I repeat, an agreeable spectacle to witness the Master driving up to the Three Pigeons about the hour of (as we would now say) luncheon, in his white hackney coach with his emblem—the Ace of Hearts—blazoned on the panel. Before the gaming began he would always take a leisurely meal; indeed, it was his habit to

say that no gentleman would ever spend less than three hours at the table. One of his humours was to insist that warm weather was dangerous to his constitution, and that in summer it was desirable to eat sparingly and with deliberation. On days that had, as someone has put it, the humidity of Uriah Heep, this was an example of his menu, which I have found filed in the old papers kept in the vaults of the Three Pigeons:

Service to Mr. Edmund Hoyle, this 28th July 1730, on acct:

A capon broth, with toasted bread
A flagon of small ale
Fricassee of sweetbreads, with currant jelly
A flask of cool Canary
Rosted wild ducks, with cheesecake and parsnips
A jugg of malmsey, from the special butt
A sallet of shrimpes and candyed cherries
A hot rabbit pye, with buttered pease and a pottle of mulled claret
Rhubarbe pasty, with barley wine to ease Mr. Hoyle's digestions
Plague water for the hott weather

"Having done suitable homage to this judicious nourishment" (Mr. Mistletoe proceeds), "Mr. Hoyle would have brought to him his own yard of clay, which he would leisurely fill with the best pure Virginia leaf, gazing about him the while

upon the impatient faces of his friends who were anxious to get to the cards. 'Never indulge the carnal appetites immoderately in hot weather,' he would say, blowing out a long blue whiff into the cool twilight of the old taproom, panelled in magnificent dark walnut. This was the last word uttered, for when the Master took his seat at the card table no man dared speak. A sacred quiet filled the place as he reached for the pasteboards and deftly cut for the deal, tossing back his lace cuffs over his lean yellowish wrists, the colour (he was something bilious) of old piano keys. The rest was silence, with only the fall of the cards and the occasional clink of a bottle when Mr. Hoyle refilled his vase of Burgundy, which he always drank while gaming. A life of abstemious control, he said, was needful for one who must keep his wits alert."

DAME QUICKLY AND THE BOILROASTER

SOMETHING had happened to Dame Quickly's storage battery, and all the amperes seemed to have escaped. An extremely friendly and cheerful young man came up from Fred Seaman's garage, with mysterious medical-looking instruments, to grant a consultation. In the course of the chat he remarked, "If you once ride in a *Boilroaster* car, you'll never be satisfied with any other."

His energetic hands were at that moment deep in our loved Dame Quickly's mechanisms; she was wholly at his mercy; naturally we did not feel like contradicting him or saying anything tactless. We wondered, but only privately, whether the fact that Fred Seaman is the local agent for the *Boilroaster* had anything to do with this comment? Or perhaps, we thought to ourself, our friend the battery expert really is a convinced enthusiast for the *Boilroaster*, and felt that way about it before he took a job at Fred Seaman's establishment? We were sorry that William James was dead, for

we felt that the author of *The Will to Believe* would be the man to whom to submit this philosophical problem. We were puzzled, because only a few days earlier another man had said to us (with an equal accent of decisiveness and conviction) that he would rather have a Dame Quickly than any *Boilroaster* ever made. "They stand up better than any of 'em," he had said. Suddenly it occurred to us how useful it would be if there were some kind of spiritual gauge—like the hydrometer our friend was plunging into the cells of the Dame's battery—which one could dip into a man's mind to test the intellectual mixture of his remarks; to evaluate the proportions of those various liquids (the strong acid of self-interest, the mild distilled water of candour, etc.) which electrify his mental ignition.

Well, how about the *Boilroaster*, we said—(searching for a technical term that would show him we are a practical man)—Do they stand up?

He suggested that we get into his own *Boilroaster*, which stood grandly overshining the dusty Dame (reminding us of those pictures where a silhouette of the new *Majestic* is placed behind a little picture of the *Teutonic* or some other humble ship of older days) and take a run around Salamis while he tinkered with the battery.

Oh, no, we said nervously. Dame Quickly is the only car we know how to run, and besides the gear

shift is different in the *Boilroaster;* we might get confused and have to come all the way home in reverse, which would be bad for our reputation in the village.

Have you ever ridden in the *Boilroaster?* he asked.

Yes, we said—Fred Seaman took us over to Locust Valley the other evening. (Suddenly a horrid thought struck us. We had thought that Fred had given us that lift over to Locust Valley just in the goodness of his heart. But now we wondered——)

When he left, he put in our hand a handsome book all about the *Boilroaster*. That, we felt, was the first step in breaking down our "sales resistance," as they say in the *Business e19* course up at Columbia.

We've been reading that book, and we want to say that the chaps who write that sort of literature are cunning fellows, and masters of a very insinuating prose style. They begin with a very pretty frontispiece of a *Boilroaster* car standing, all alone and dazzling-new, in a magnificent landscape of snow-clad peaks and clear lakes. How the *Boilroaster* got way up there (evidently somewhere near Banff) without any one driving her, and without even a speck of dust on her fenders, is a mystery. But there she is. Perhaps the man who drove her all those miles from the nearest dis-

tributing agency is at the bar of the C. P. R. Hotel, off behind those pine forests.

All the highbrow critics will tell you that the truly great writers are lovers of Beauty. Well, the anonymous author of the *Boilroaster* book is as keen a champion of Beauty as any one we ever heard of. And not only beauty, but refinement, too. There are two whole pages giving little pictures of "refinements." This is a book, we think, that could be put in the hands of the young without any hesitation. In fact, that is just where we did put it, for the urchin is cutting out the pictures of *Boilroasters* at this very minute. The whole trend of Advertising nowadays (we wonder if they mention this in the lectures on Advertising Psychology up at Columbia) is to give delight to children. We would hate to tell the Cunard Line and the International Mercantile Marine Company how many of their folders our juveniles have scissored up with shouts of delight.

The *Boilroaster* book is going to be a lesson to us. We don't know if we will ever own a *Boilroaster*, but we are certain that before we do we have got to spruce up and be a bit more genteel. At present, we would be a bit of anticlimax riding in a car like that. There is "new beauty in its double bevel body line." We want to look a bit more streamline ourself before we go in for one. There are "massive head lamps, graceful cowl lights, the

louvres are more in number and their edges show a smart touch of gold." There is "a courtesy light illuminating the left side of the car," and a ventilator in the cowl. We don't know exactly what the cowl is, or the louvres, or at any rate we've never discovered them in Dame Quickly.

Just as we are writing this, we see a headline in the papers (in the *Evening Post*, to be accurate) about Sir Charles Higham, who "Sees Advertising as a Great Moral Force." We know of no writer who has a more solid appreciation of moral forces than the author of our *Boilroaster* brochure. What he has to say about "sheer merit," "sound principles," "elimination of waste," "combination of beauty and utility," "superiority and refinement," "good taste" and "harmony of colour" makes this work a genuine essay in æsthetics. Moreover, we like his rational eclecticism. When the car has a 126-inch wheelbase, it makes it very easy riding and gives it charming "roadability." When it has a 119-inch wheelbase, it "gives a short turning radius which makes it remarkably easy to handle." Even in the least details, our author has an eye for loveliness. He confesses himself struck by "the attractive grouping of instruments on the dash, which emphasizes *Boilroaster* individuality." The upholstery, he says, is "restful." The folding seat for the extra passenger is "in reality a comfortable chair." And when we learn that the

opalescent dome and corner lamps "provide enough light for reading," our only regret is that he doesn't add a suggested list of readings for tenants of a *Boilroaster* Enormous Eight.

Unhappily space is lacking to tell you in detail what a competent and winning fellow this author is. In the scientific portions of the work he rivals Fabre—in regard to the clutch, he says "the driven member is a single spider rotating between two rings." His passion for elegance, comfort, simplicity, and economy has never been surpassed—no, not by Plato or Walter Pater. The only drawback about his essay is that we feel we could never live up to the vehicle he describes.

VACATIONING WITH DE QUINCEY

I

HAVING severed our telephone wire and instructed the office boys to tell all callers that we are out at lunch, we look forward to a happy summer. We are going to begin enjoying ourself by systematically exploring the books in the library of the *Evening Post*. On a top shelf, well sprinkled with dust, we have found the excellent collected edition of De Quincey, in fourteen volumes, edited by David Masson. It is true that the first four volumes seem to have disappeared; but even if we begin at Volume V we calculate we shall find enough to keep us entertained for some time.

After we have finished De Quincey we are going to tackle P. T. Barnum's *Struggles and Triumphs*, a book that has long tempted us. We think kindly of the Founding Fathers of the *Post* for having assembled all these interesting volumes for our pleasure.

We have begun De Quincey with Volume V—

Biographies and Biographic Sketches. Some of this—particularly the Joan of Arc—has a faintly familiar taste: perhaps we were made to read it at school. But we do not think we ever read before the magnificent essay on Charles Lamb. There is a long interpolated passage about Joan of Arc which does not seem to have anything to do with Lamb. Perhaps the *North British Review* (in which the essay first appeared in 1848) paid its contributors on a space basis. But, ejecting this parenthesis, it is certainly noble stuff. Moreover, it is interesting to note that at the time De Quincey wrote, Lamb was by no means established on the pinnacle of security as a permanent brightness in our literature. De Quincey writes as though consciously contradicting some opposition. It seems odd to hear him speak of people who "regard him [Lamb] with the old hostility and the old scorn."

We had intended not to introduce any quotations, for in this very volume De Quincey makes some stinging remarks about people who pad out their copy by interlarding material from stronger fists. But indeed the following passage seems to us so near the top of prose felicity that we lapse from grace:

> In regard to wine, Lamb and myself had the same habit, viz., to take a great deal *during* dinner, none *after* it. Consequently, as Miss Lamb (who drank only water) retired almost with the dinner itself, nothing

remained for men of our principles, the rigour of which we had illustrated by taking rather too much of old port before the cloth was drawn, except talking; amœbean colloquy, or, in Dr. Johnson's phrase, a dialogue of "brisk reciprocation." But this was impossible; over Lamb, at this period of his life, there passed regularly, after taking wine, a brief eclipse of sleep. It descended upon him as softly as a shadow. In a gross person, laden with superfluous flesh, and sleeping heavily, this would have been disagreeable; but in Lamb, thin even to meagreness, spare and wiry as an Arab of the desert or as Thomas Aquinas wasted by scholastic vigils, the affection of sleep seemed rather a network of aerial gossamer than of earthly cobweb—more like a golden haze falling upon him gently from the heavens than a cloud exhaling upwards from the flesh. Motionless in his chair as a bust, breathing so gently as scarcely to seem certainly alive, he presented the image of repose midway between life and death, like the repose of sculpture; and, to one who knew his history, a repose affectingly contrasting with the calamities and internal storms of his life.

De Quincey's essay on Lamb, like so many of the great critiques of the early nineteenth century, was originally written as a book review. We like to imagine what a *Blackwood* or *Edinburgh* reviewer would have said if the editor (in the manner of to-day) had told him to deal with a volume in 500 or 1,000 words. The nineteenth century reviewer took a spacious view of his job. Of this particular

essay, which purported to be a notice of Talfourd's *Final Memorials of Charles Lamb* (1848), De Quincey said (very nobly):

> Liberated from this casual office of throwing light upon a book, raised to its grander station of a solemn deposition to the moral capacities of man in conflict with calamity—viewed as a return made into the chanceries of heaven upon an issue directed from that court to try the amount of power lodged in a poor desolate pair of human creatures for facing the very anarchy of storms—this obscure life of the two Lambs, brother and sister (for the two lives were one life), rises into grandeur that is not paralleled once in a generation.

Of course, De Quincey was a celestial kind of reviewer. Not even opium could make most of us write like that. Also he had the right idea about dealing with correspondence and accumulated papers. He used to live in one set of lodgings until the mass of miscellaneous matter filled the room. Then he would move to other quarters, leaving the pile in charge of the landlady. He always took care not to inform her of the new address.

There is a great deal more to be said about this Volume V, but we must skip along. (There is no reason, you know, why you shouldn't look up the book for yourself.) We will just be generous enough to pass on De Quincey's anecdote about how Coleridge first became a great reader. Coleridge,

as a child, was going down the Strand in a day dream, imagining himself swimming the Hellespont. Moving his hands as though swimming, he happened to touch a gentleman's pocket. The latter thought him a young pickpocket. "What! so young and yet so wicked?" The boy, terrified, sobbed a denial, and explained that he had been imagining himself as Leander. The gentleman was so pleased that he gave him a subscription to a circulating library.

The next volume of De Quincey that we intend to study is X, in which we find *Letters to a Young Man Whose Education Has Been Neglected.* We are rather stricken to note that these were addressed to a young man who was exactly the same age as ourself.

The first of these letters was evidently in the nature of a Christmas present to the young gentleman, known to us only as Mr. M. It is dated December 24, 1824. Whether Mr. M. was an actual person and drew this letter from his stocking on Christmas morning we are not informed. Our own conjecture is that he was as mythical as his sister-in-lore Miss M., of Walter de la Mare's *Memoirs of a Midget.* Somehow there is a humorous lack of reality in the way De Quincey introduces him. Mr. M. is in possession of "great opulence, unclouded reputation, and freedom from unhappy connexions." Also he had "the

priceless blessing of unfluctuating health." And yet he exhibited "a general dejection." This, a young lady of seventeen told De Quincey, "was well known to arise from an unfortunate attachment in early life." But finally De Quincey exhumed the truth. Mr. M. had been defrauded of education. And Mr. M.'s first inquiry is whether at his present age of 32 it would be worth his while to go to college.

No, indeed, is De Quincey's unhesitant reply. Mr. M. would be 12 or 14 years older than his fellow-students, which would make their association "mutually burthensome." And as for the value of college lectures—

> These whether public or private, are surely the very worst modes of acquiring any sort of accurate knowledge, and are just as much inferior to a good book on the same subject as that book hastily read aloud, and then immediately withdrawn, would be inferior to the same book left in your possession, and open at any hour to be consulted, retraced, collated, and in the fullest sense studied.

It appears that the dejected young man, despite—or perhaps on account of—his lack of education, nourished a secret desire to be a writer. He had been reading Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, particularly the chapter called *An Affectionate Exhortation to Those Who in Early*

Life Feel Themselves Disposed to Become Authors. According to De Quincey, Mr. M. asks his opinion on Coleridge's views of this topic. Alas! now we are more convinced than ever that Mr. M. is only a phantom: unquestionably De Quincey, the canny super-journalist, wafted him from the opium flagon as an ingenious target for some anti-Coleridge banter. His chaff directed at Coleridge is gorgeous enough. It is double-decked chaff, too, for he not only affectionately twits his fellow opium-eater *in propria persona*, but introduces for discussion an anonymous "eminent living Englishman," who is plainly also Coleridge. He compares C. with Leibnitz for his combination of fine mind with a physique of equine robustness. This passage somehow causes us to chuckle aloud—

> They were centaurs—heroic intellects with brutal capacities of body. What partiality in nature! In general a man has reason to think himself well off in the great lottery of this life if he draws the prize of a healthy stomach without a mind; or the prize of a fine intellect with a crazy stomach; but that any man should draw both is truly astonishing.

The first letter concludes with a charmingly humorous discussion of the problem (valid now as then) how a man of letters may get any creative work done and at the same time keep his wife and children happy.

II

Old Bill Barron, up in the composing room, asks us when we are going to take our Vacation. We are taking it now, we reply, reading De Quincey. Certainly we can't imagine why any one with as pleasing a job as ours should have any right to go off on holiday. There are so many people in this town who have to spend their time reading the new books: we are going to enjoy ourself by dipping into the old ones. With one exception. We have found, in the office of the *Literary Review*, and immediately made off with, *L'Extravagante Personnalité de Jacques Casanova*, by Joseph Le Gras (Paris: Bernard Grasset). We read the first sentence—

Emporté dans une berline confortable, dont les coffres sont abondamment pourvus de viandes, de pâtés et de vins; une femme sur les genoux, une autre parfois à ses côtés qui se frotte amoureusement à lui; vêtu de riches vêtements, le jabot et les manchettes enjolivés de fines dentelles, les goussets garnis de montres précieuses, le ventre chatouillé de breloques, les doigts étincelants de bagues, les poches tintant d'or et le mollet caressé dans la soie; réclamant à grand bruit les meilleurs chevaux aux relais, la plus belle chambre dans les auberges, jetant sa bourse à l'hôtelier et repartant au milieu des révérences et des courbettes; tel nous apparaît, en une attitude un peu conventionelle, l'aventurier Casanova au temps de sa splendeur.

That, of course, is one way of taking a Vacation. We remember, with a small behind-the-arras chuckle, one of Pearsall Smith's *Trivia* called "Lord Arden," which deliciously hits off the buried Casanova in all of us. At any rate, we shall read this book about Extravagant Jack.

But we must get back to De Quincey, or you'll think we are purposely avoiding the topic. We hardly know where to resume our prattle about this glorious creature. Perhaps the first thing to note is an advisable shift in viewpoint. Nowadays we are all introduced to De Quincey at school, so his name comes to us with a peculiar mixture of sublimity and painful awe—for we learn that he was a wicked opium eater. We do not realize that a number of his contemporaries regarded him as a low-down dog of a journalist. Southey, for instance, called him "one of the greatest scoundrels living," and urged Hartley Coleridge to go to Edinburgh with a strong cudgel and give De Quincey a public drubbing as "a base betrayer of the hospitable social hearth." What was the cause of this peevishness? Why, of course, the *Reminiscences of the English Lake Poets*, a book whose social indiscretion is exceeded only by its magnificently fecund humour; told, like all De Quincey's waggishness, with a rich sonorous volubility and luxurious plenitude of verbal skill. There is a subtle wickedness of amusement in the apparent

solemnity of De Quincey's polysyllables. The indignation caused latterly by such books as Margot Asquith's was nothing compared to the anger of the Lake Poets when they found their innocent privacies laid bare by the Opium Eater's pen. The Lakers took themselves as seriously as groups of humanitarians always do. And they were quite right. Francis Thompson complains that Milton never forgot he was Milton—"but we must admit it was worth remembering." Yet the domestic affairs of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey were indeed irresistibly comic. We have not forgotten that Hartley Coleridge, whose childhood was so charmingly enshrined in a poem by Wordsworth—

> Thou fairy voyager, that dost float
> In such clear water that thy boat
> May rather seem
> To brood on air than on an earthly stream—

also floated in liquids more ruddy. He was removed from his fellowship at Oxford on the charge of drinking too much—which must have been a very great deal in the Oxford of those days.

Reminiscences of the Lake Poets is the kind of book (Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides* is another) that causes indignation to the victims, but intense delight to posterity. Posterity always has the best

of us, anyhow. The anecdote of Coleridge's father and the protruding shirt has always seemed to us one of the most disgracefully amusing minutiæ in literature—and yet even now, after a hundred years of sanctity, we are not sure whether we ought to reprint it. Well, you can buy *Reminiscences of the Lake Poets* in the Everyman Series.

The next thing to be said about De Quincey is that he would have been a glorious editor for one of Mr. Hearst's newspapers. He wrote a good deal better than Mr. Arthur Brisbane; but he had the same acute instinct as to what the public is really interested in. We believe it was James L. Ford who described the Hearstian doctrine of newspaper policy as "Plenty of crime and plenty of underclothes." De Quincey was a glutton for crime. Did you know that he lost his job as editor of the *Westmoreland Gazette* because for sixteen months he filled its columns mainly with news of local lawbreaking? His employers did not appreciate genius. His instinct was absolutely sound. In spite of the disclaimers of refined people, crime news, when written not merely vulgarly but with earnestness and art, is one of the most valuable features of any journal. If we were running a newspaper we would begin by scouring the press clubs for a young De Quincey.

He had, we say, the newspaper man's instinct. Writing of the appalling Williams murders in 1811,

he complains that though the outrage was committed shortly after midnight on Sunday morning, nothing reached the papers until Monday. "To have met the public demand for details on the Sunday, which might so easily have been done by cancelling a couple of dull columns and substituting a circumstantial narrative . . . would have made a small fortune. By proper handbills dispersed through all quarters of the infinite metropolis, 250,000 extra copies might have been sold."

This occurs in the postscript to *Murder as One of the Fine Arts*. In that immortal essay itself the macabre humour and the sledge-hammer impact of irony are probably a bit too grim and a bit (also) too learned and crushing for the gentler sort of reader. But the postscript, dated 1854, is the kind of horrific febrifuge that turns the heart to an Eskimo patty. We suggest that you try reading it aloud to a house party if you want to see blenching and shudders. The ultimate tribute to any writing of the narrative kind is to read it perpetually running ahead, in a horrid tension of eagerness, meanwhile holding one's proper "place" with a finger until one can force the eye back to pursue a methodical course. We ourself read that postscript thus, late at night in a lonely country house; and, by a noble summation of horror, Gissing began to growl and bristle as we reached the climax. We should hate to admit with what paltry

quaverings we went forth into the night, where the trees were smoke-colour in a pallid moonglow, to see what was amiss. It was only a wandering dog prowling about. But for a few moments we had felt certain that our harmless Salamis Estates were thickly ambushed with assassins. It then required a trip to the icebox, and a considerable infare upon a very ammoniac Roquefort cheese, to restore tranquillity.

III

But we were talking about De Quincey. Yesterday was by no means a day wasted, for we got our amiable friend Franklin Abbott into our clutches, made him take a note of *Reminiscences of the English Lake Poets* (in the Everyman Series, we repeat) and insisted to him that for a man of genteel tastes this is one of the most entertaining works ever printed. And also by mere chance, which so often disposes the bright fragments of life into a ruddy and high-spirited pattern, we stopped in at a bookshop on Church Street just to say howdy to the eccentric Raymond Halsey. Happening to remark that it is now just a hundred years since the *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* was published, Raymond disappeared with a rabbit-like scuttling motion; was heard digging among shelves at the rear, and returned with the smile of one who thinks he foresees a sale. It was a

first edition of the *Opium Eater* with the magical imprint of Taylor & Hessey. Was there ever a more sacred name among publishers? We don't need to remind you they were Keats's publishers, too. "Only fifty dollars," said Raymond, but it was lunch time and we had to leave.

In the dark rear chamber of a Cedar Street tavern, in that corner underneath the photographs of the Cheshire Cheese, something happened that seemed to us almost as pretty as anything published by the vanished Taylor & Hessey. Frank spied an old friend of his, a fellow Pittsburgher, and the latter halted at our table on his way out. We complimented him upon the fine bronze patina of his countenance, to which he replied that he had been salmon fishing. "You know," he said, "there are only three salmon-flies that I care a continental for," and from his pocket he drew a small pink envelope. With a tender hand he slid its contents onto the board. "There they are," he said. His voice seemed to change. "Dusty Miller, Durham Ranger, and Jock Scott." The little feathery trinkets, glowing with dainty treacheries, lay there on the ale-bleached wood. Certainly it seemed to us there was poetry in that moment. "I go to Bingham, Maine," he said, and drive eighteen miles up the Kennebec." (A small postern door opened gently upon another world.) "Old So-and-so is waiting at the station.

He's always there. I could leave to-night; he'd be sure to be there when the train got in."

We had a perfectly vivid picture of old So-and-so waiting at the Bingham station. Yes, we could see him. Then the postern door closed, gently but definitely, with that strong pneumatic piston that is attached to all our doors.

We were saying, however, that De Quincey's *Reminiscences of the Lake Poets* caused great indignation among the Grasmere coterie. This was due not to any malice in De Quincey's manner of writing, which was affectionate and admiring throughout. It was due to something far more painful than malice—the calm, detailed, candid, and minute dissection of their lives. There was truly something astoundingly clinical in this microscopy. For instance, to take the case of Wordsworth's household, these are some of the comments De Quincey makes:

(1) That Mrs. Wordsworth—whose charm and simplicity he adores—was cross-eyed.

(2) That Dorothy—Wordsworth's sister—was a fervid and noble character, but stammered and was ungraceful.

(3) That Wordsworth's appearance grew less attractive with advancing age.

(4) That his legs were very ill-shapen and "were pointedly condemned by all female connoisseurs in legs." And that his shoulders were drooping and narrow.

(5) "The mouth, and the whole circumjacencies of the mouth, composed the strongest feature in Wordsworth's face." In fact, they reminded De Quincey of Milton.

(6) That he aged very rapidly—when thirty-nine he was taken to be over sixty.

(7) That his brother John, a sea captain, had lost his ship while drunk.

(8) That Wordsworth cannot have been amiable as a child.

(9) That the only time Wordsworth was drunk was as an undergraduate at Cambridge on visiting the rooms once occupied by Milton.

(10) That he had not the temperament ever to be an attractive wooer, and that it was "perplexing" that he had ever married.

(11) That he had had astonishing good luck in financial matters.

(12) That the Wordsworth menage was excessively plain and severe in simplicity.

(13) That Wordsworth and Southey did not really like each other.

(14) That Wordsworth treated books very barbarously, and used to cut the pages with a butter-smeared knife.

(15) That Wordsworth's library was meagre and insignificant compared to Southey's.

These are only a few of De Quincey's remarks, digested to their naked gist; by which they lose all the amusing complexity of comment wherein they are folded. But the précis will suffice to show that,

whether consciously or not, they were exactly calculated to wound, with very deep incision, the most delicate sensibilities of an austere, somewhat humourless and extremely self-regarding man.

IV

On the 13th of February, 1848, De Quincey received a letter asking him to contribute a writing of some sort for an "album," to be sold at a Ladies' Bazaar. This was to be held in March of that year, for the benefit of the Library of the Glasgow Athenæum, and the ladies begged him to reply by "return of post." This incident in itself sounds contemporary enough to give us a fellow feeling with De Quincey.

He had nothing available to send to the bazaar, but there was one unfailing resource—his bathtub. Let him describe it:

> In my study I have a bath, large enough to swim in provided the swimmer, not being an ambitious man, is content with going ahead to the extent of three inches at the utmost. This bath, having been superseded (as regards its original purpose) by a better, has yielded a secondary service to me as a reservoir for my MSS. Filled to the brim it is by papers of all sorts and sizes. Every paper written *by* me, *to* me, *for* me, *of* or *concerning* me, and, finally, *against* me, is to be found, after an impossible search, in this capacious repertory. Those papers, by the way, that come under the last (or hostile)

subdivision are chiefly composed by shoemakers and tailors—an affectionate class of men, who stick by one to the last like pitch-plasters.

De Quincey decided that the only thing to do was to draw something at random from the bath-tub for the ladies' album. Accordingly, he made a little ceremony of it. "Three young ladies, haters of everything unfair," were called in as referees; and a young man to do the actual dipping. There were to be four dips into the tub, and, for some reason not quite clear to us, the young man was made to attire himself in a new potato-sack, with holes cut for his legs and only his right arm free. It would have been more to the purpose, we should have thought, to blindfold him; but he was instructed to dip at random, holding his face "at right angles to the bath." He was to be allowed one minute to rummage at random among "the billowy ocean of papers," and at the command *Haul Up!* was to come forth with whatever his fingers approved. Before the ceremony began a glass of wine was brought. De Quincey proposed the health of the ladies of the Athenæum, and pledged his honour that whatever MS. should be dredged up would be sent off to the bazaar. And this, he protested, though somewhere buried in the bath there lay a paper which he valued as equal to the half of his possessions.

But he was compelled to depart from the strict rigour of his scheme. For let us see what the young man discovered in the bathtub. The first dip brought up a letter still unopened. It proved to be a dinner invitation for the 15th of February. De Quincey was congratulating himself on the success of his raffle, which had thus enabled him to answer this letter without irreparable breach of manners, when the young lady referees discovered that the letter was four years old.

Number 2 was a "dun." The young man was, to De Quincey's dismay, dredging in a portion of the tub rich in overdue bills. "It is true," he says, "that I had myself long remarked that part of the channel to be dangerously infested with duns. In searching for literary or philosophic paper, it would often happen for an hour together that I brought up little else than variegated specimens of the dun." And so Number 3 was also a dun.

Number 4 turned out "a lecture addressed to myself by an ultra-moral friend—a lecture on procrastination, and not badly written." And this also De Quincey refused to allow to be sent to the Athenæum. So everything hinged on the fifth and extra dip, which was committed to one of the young ladies. She blushed rosily (De Quincey assures us) at the responsibility, and earnestly "ploitered" among the papers for full five minutes. "She contended that she knew, by intuition, the

sort of paper on which duns were written: and, whatever else might come up, she was resolved it should not be a dun." "Don't be too sure," said De Quincey; but when the paper was finally drawn out it was a blank sheet.

This, the referees maintained, was a judgment on De Quincey, and meant that he should use the empty page to begin a new and original contribution for the ladies of Glasgow. Which he did, and turned out a little essay, suggested by their recent sport, on *Sortilege and Astrology*. We have tried to read it, but so far without success.

We are interested to note that others besides ourself have been turning back to De Quincey. In a recent *Fortnightly Review* there is an article by H. M. Paull, sound enough in its observations, but grievously lacking in style. Mr. Paull, moreover, seems to us to shoot too far when he says that "to modern readers De Quincey's efforts to be sprightly only cause annoyance." It is true that sometimes his astonishing verbosity and his passion for footnotes outrun a hasty temper; but for our part we find something notably odd and agreeable in his queer, preposterous humour. His habit of calling great men familiarly by their first names—Doctor Johnson is "Sam," and even the learned and ancient Josephus becomes "Joe," and Thomas à Kempis "Tom"—is deplored by Mr. Paull; but this habit, we fear, has been inherited

by columnists, and we had better not defend it too vigorously. The bathtub anecdote, which we have pared down until it loses most of its gusto, is, in the original, not devoid of humour. (Volume XIII of the collected works.)

And De Quincey's ramified and rambling way of narrative offers surprising delights in unexpected parentheses. For instance, in the *Opium Eater* he happens to mention a murder that had been committed on Hounslow Heath. "The name of the murdered person was Steele, and he was the owner of a lavender plantation in that neighbourhood." A lavender plantation! There is a fragrant circumstance for the mind of a poet to dwell on. Think of the chance immortality of the unlucky Steele—deathless now, because (poor devil) he was murdered and had a lavender plantation.

THE SPANISH SULTRY

TURNING up masterpieces of unintentional humour is a pleasant diversion of most writers. Everyone has his own favourites—on this side Atlantic many students vouch for *The Balsam Groves of Grandfather Mountain* (by Shepherd M. Dugger) as the most amusing book written in America; in Britain a few diligent explorers beat the drum for *Irene Iddesleigh*, a novel written by Mrs. Amanda McKittrick Ros (of Belfast). Neither of these books, unhappily, is easy to lay hand upon. But as a possible competitor, how do you like *The Spanish Sultry*, by Ambrose Dargason (Harrisburg, 1905)? We have no copy, but once we took down some extracts.

Mr. Dargason's hero was a window-glass merchant "whose nature was as transparent and reflective as the goods he throve in." This merchant's name was Wilbert Vocks; after his retirement from merchandise he spent his time in travelling about looking for a suitable wife to inherit his fortune. Unhappily, his inherent caution always caused him to sheer off just when the

reader was expecting the happy nuptials. The scene on the park bench in Harrisburg, one moony evening, is a favourite of ours:

In the anæmic brightness of the crescendo moon Frederica's eyes were gilded with the splendor of her sex's softest charms. They were frosted bulbs of allure, and Wilbert trenched delicately upon her French-shod toes as a symbol of hardy waxing tenderness.

"Oh, Mr. Vocks," said she, the beautiful coamings of her orbs brimming over with cheer, "how many equinoxes will hereafter wax and wane, search through this garden, but for one in vain."

"You are quoting the Rubaiyat," said he, "but with indifferent adhesion to the text."

"Adhesion," she replied, "was never one of my frailties," and a trifle peaked [sic] withdrew to the distant angle of the iron settee.

Wilbert's momentary harshness had already dissipated and he regretted this intrusion of pedantic nicety upon the moonlit promise of their double entente. "I bespeak a rapproachment," he gallantly murmured and, sliding deftly along the parallel rods of metal subforming the trysting bench, found himself chilled by coming en rapport with a section of the seat not warmed by humane contact.

"But you must not reproach me," she taunted shyly. "It is too plain that you were not brought up in Harrisburg, where men speak chivalrously to women and good breeding is a native filament of the tender air."

"Probably you are cold on that hitherto unfrequented segment of iron slatting," he said, shrivelling his inward

tremolo by an affection of stern brusque. "Why not slide over this way a little, and chivalry commends my sheltering you from the sharp fidgetings of frost which, however commendable to coal dealers, betray the softer passions to gooseflesh and eventual snivel."

Womanly, without further quibble, she responded, and the beauty of that unsophisticated face was shielded soon from external examination by the protective polygon of his arm and elbow. It was a generous moment, and in harmony with all the higher laws of human sentiment.

The delighted reader might be pardoned for thinking that in this idyllic scene the restless affections of Mr. Vocks had found satisfaction. But Frederica, after several evenings of intellectual interchange, proved too shallow for his deep-laden mind. As Mr. Dargason put it (his taste for oddly mixed nautical metaphors was rather extreme):

He grounded upon the shoals of her mentality and, after striving vainly to warp off into deeper areas of thought and sentiment, was forced to broach his cargo of affection upon the outgoing tides. Only thus, by careening and jettisoning his rich hatches of emotional freight, and scudding forth under bare poles and jury rigging, was he able to win clear to the open sea of freedom, escaping the lee shores of an uncongenial union. The bright occulting lamps of her eyes shone like desperate beacons, but he remembered that lighthouses are intended not to allure the cautious mariner, but to

warn him away. He reefed his binnacle gravely, and with only an aching heart throbbing in the empty hatches of his personality determined henceforward to steer by the unquestionable stars of intuition. Her soundings were too easily fathomed. In a word, she was not deep enough.

To quiet his melancholy, Mr. Vocks returns into the busy world of trade. We have not space for very full quotation, but his discussion with his business associates is worth a brief extract:

As surely as my name is Wilbert Vocks (he said), I intend that this business shall be conducted in accord with all principles of integrity and without demurrage to trickery. I have been allowed by fortune to make a frugal and circumstantial inspection of the general laws and accidents of life, and it is my conviction that by exploring the estuaries of remorse no bill of lading was ever brought to consummation. My rudder is uncompromisingly turned to the favouring gales of expedience, and we will sail a vigorous course into the latitudes of magnetism.

In this admirable resolution Mr. Vocks was strengthened by his partner (Mr. Henry Shingle), who is described as "a thrifty man the colour of a glass of light beer, bleached brown by an open-air youth in Monongahela County, but surmounted spiritually by the bright bubbles of aspiration and elasticity. His clothes were neat and his habits

orderly; of his meditative components it is not necessary to surmise. He had not made a habit of thinking profoundly, for he knew that any thought he might have could easily be rebutted by more carefully trained men; therefore he spared himself the embarrassment of argument. His management of the Sales Department, however, was not to be criticized."

Dargason is always at his best when examining the undulations and sinuosities of temperament in his female characters. Some of Henry Shingle's melancholia is explained when we learn of his wife that "some of her meditations were unmatronly in the extreme." But you must know Mrs. Shingle better:

> Mrs. Henry Shingle, unusual among ladies of Monongahela County in being unquestionably a person of specific appeal toward unconscientious gentry, had nevertheless made a loyal Presbyterian struggle against the disorderly suggestions bequeathed to her powerful bosom by an ancestry which had been spasmodic and illicit. So she was a person of aliquot parts, her mind was often troubled by froward imaginations, but she rarely uttered words to that effect. Little ripples of vulgarity ran through her intellect, which in a writer of fiction would have been profitable no doubt, but with womanly prudence she did not reveal these regrets to the other mourners, but pickled them whole in the dark brine of matronly reservation. The deceased would have been surprised, perhaps even pleased, now that he was done

with such perplexities, to know how unmatronly her meditations were with regard to his truncated career. But she was obsequious in the extreme, no one at the funeral gave a better emphasis of sorrow, and hove to among gusts of female hysteria she rode upon the anchor of what certainly looked like a stalwart faith. Henry knew better, but like the business man he was he said nothing.

Many of her troubles no doubt were caused by faulty circulation, certainly her husband had been embittered by the extreme chill of her extremities, the whole of her system as she called it, though too unexpected in some respects for the scientific word, from the knees downward, was frequently obsessed by strong venous chills which contracted the palms of her feet. She complained like the old king in the Bible of this, they were as cold as ice, nor did the old king's remedy appeal to her as at all liable to prove efficient; besides the virgins of Monongahela County, she at any rate supposed, were long since asleep at this hour of the night. There was nothing to be done but complain to her husband, which she was prompt to do, but he, sombre with accretions of woe, paid too impersonal heed to her anxieties. Disregarding the anguish of those womanly rondures and chilled extremes he merely remarked "Why don't you get out another blanket?" and went down cellar to open the draught of the furnace.

We wish we had taken the trouble to copy out more of *The Spanish Sultry* while we were about it. The Sultry herself was the lady to whom Mr. Vocks finally succumbed: she caused the fracture

of the window-glass business. As the author put it: "Hers was not the clear transparence of Mr. Vocks's glassy nature; she was stained with violent and ominous colours, and through the panes of her vehement character there burst downpours of scarlet and lavender trouble."

THE STORY OF GINGER CUBES

I

[*A letter from the Proprietor of the Ginger Cubes to his Advertising Manager, who is ill in hospital.*]

DEAR RUSSELL: When I heard that you had been taken to the hospital with a badly dislocated sense of proportion and exhaustion of the adjective secretions, I was worried. The doctor said that you were suffering from a severe attack of deprecation and under-statement, and I feared that would mean you would be quite unfit to help me in the forthcoming campaign for Ginger Cubes. But I hear now that a few weeks of silence and relaxation will bring you round. I have ordered the *Police Gazette* and *The Nation* to be sent you. Each in its own way is highly entertaining.

In our last conference, just before you were taken ill, you tried with your usual energy and bullheaded vitality to persuade me to say a word about the Ginger Cubes at the Paperhangers Convention. You made a great deal of the point that this would be a vast gathering, and that it

would be excellent business for me to give them a "message."

I ask you to meditate this thought: give me a small group of folks who are more or less interested in the same sort of thing that I am, and I will "talk my head off." But speaking to large, miscellaneous audiences, many of whom are only incubating there to pass away the time until the theatres open, is my idea of loss of compression.

We have appropriated a fine promotion budget for the Ginger Cubes, but I am holding up any action until I can argue the situation with you. About newspaper advertising, for instance—I want your opinion as to the papers which are read (1) most carefully, (2) by the class of people to whom the Ginger Cubes are likely to appeal, (3) at the time of day when their minds (and palates) are receptive—i.e., morning or evening? For instance, do you think that people will be likely to be tempted by the Cubes in the morning, just after breakfast? I think not. I believe that the evening, in that faintness and debility that are supposed to attack office-workers on their way home (especially in the subway) is the psychological zero hour for the Ginger Cubes.

Miss Balboa, to whom I am dictating this, says that she never noticed any sign of weakness or lack of energy in the evening rush on the subway. I believe it is worth while to get the feminine

reaction on this matter before we make any decisions. One thing I have always regretted about you as an Advertising Manager is that you are not married. Wives are often very helpful in these questions of merchandising strategy. But perhaps you can question some of the nurses at the hospital and get their reaction.

In regard to these mediums, the question of circulation does not cut any ice in my cynical and querulous mind. It is not a matter of circulation, but of penetration, that excites me.

The chemical laboratory reports that the Cubes will positively have a soothing and tonic effect upon the digestive organs, and that we are justified in saying so. Unfortunately they say that the Cubes cannot possibly be of any value in combating "pyorrhea," so we cannot go riding on the other folks' toothpaste copy. For your amusement, I have thought up this slogan:

WHY NOT INVEST IN
A NEW INTESTINE?

TRY GINGER CUBES

Which is probably too startling. But anyhow, when we have decided, I wish our copy to be

Cumulative, Concise, and Continuous. Then, ho for the Ginger Cubes!

Yours,
NICHOLAS RIBSTONE,
President The Ginger Cubes Corporation.

N.R./D.B.

II

[*A letter from the Proprietor of the Ginger Cubes to his Advertising Manager, who is ill in hospital.*]

DEAR RUSSELL: I am glad to hear from Dr. Nichevo that you are doing well. He reports that in your delirium you had visions of nothing but full page insertions, so I realize that you must have been a very sick man. I am glad you are coming out of it. The Doctor says that a little quiet meditation on business problems will help to bring you back to "normalcy."

So you might think this over. I have just been telling the boys at our conference this morning that I want our advertising matter for the Ginger Cubes to be distinguished. I've been much impressed, for instance, by those ads that Childs restaurants have been running for some time, in which they make use of historians, philosophers, poets, and what not, to introduce the topic of food. I am wondering whether, in your extensive reading, you have come across any literature in which Ginger or Cubes have been written about

in a pleasing, sentimental strain? Miss Balboa thinks that Shakespeare said something about Ginger being "hot in the mouth," but I am a little afraid of that word hot. How about

> THESE CUBES FROM THE SOUTH
> ARE WARM IN THE MOUTH

What I want you to do is tell me what the resources of literature are in the way of quotations about Ginger.

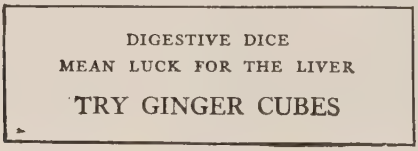
Some of the boys are much taken by a suggestion that has come in from the Gray Matter Advertising Agency, who somehow got wind of our plans. Mr. Gray, the Psychology Director of Gray Matter Agency, wants us to mark the cubes with little spots of white sugar, so that they look like dice. Here's the joker: he wants us to pack them in little boxes in which half the cubes will be marked as five-spots and half as deuces, using the slogan, They Always Turn Up Seven.

That seems to me a bit complicated, but I must admit that I'm rather struck by the idea of advertising the Cubes as Digestive Dice. I'm having the idea of marking them with sugar spots looked into, to see what it will cost. I visualize a subway

poster showing the cubes tumbling out of a dice shaker, with the words Throw These for Good Health. Do you think that is too distinctly masculine an appeal? But think of getting this idea across to the lunching public, of always carrying a box of the Ginger Cubes in their vest pocket (we could have the box shaped like a little dice-shaker, hey?), they can use them to throw for who is to pay the check, and then eat them. Can you put that thought in twelve words?

What a pity that neither of us is married, and has no wife to fall back on for advice in this delicate matter. Miss Balboa, my new stenographer, thinks that women would not be attracted by this gambling note; she says that women are born Dutch-treaters, and do not fall for the idea of settling the lunch-check by mere chance. Please see what the hospital nurses think about this.

This man Gray, from the Gray Matter Agency, is a whirlwind. He has shot in some suggestive layouts for car cards that make my head spin. These are some of his aspirations—



FOR A CHEW IN THE TUBES
CHOOSE GINGER CUBES

And he has doped out a map showing the whole digestive apparatus laid out like a subway system, and the Ginger Cubes keep traffic moving.

All this seems to me a bit too unconventional, although I confess I am amused by the originality. Tell me what your reaction is. I'm sending you some of the Cubes to distribute among the nurses.

Yours,

NICHOLAS RIBSTONE,
President The Ginger Cubes Corporation.

N.R./D.B.

III

[*A letter from Miss Candida Cumnor, one of the nurses of the Hippocrates Hospital, to Mr. Nicholas Ribstone, President of the Ginger Cubes Corporation.*]

DEAR MR. RIBSTONE: Poor Mr. Russell is still very weak, and has not been able to write to you himself. Dr. Nichevo says that he has never seen a more interesting case of complete exhaustion of the salesmanship glands. He thinks that the patient must have been under a very severe strain for a long time preceding the breakdown. I gathered from what Mr. Russell said in his period of delirium that he had been trying to sell by mail

order a complete set of Tolstoy's works, but by some mistake had bought the wrong mailing list from one of the houses that deal in such things. They gave him a list of members of the Ku Klux Klan, and the returns on his effort were so disheartening that it broke him all up. He was very queer for a while. But one delusion helped a great deal. He had a fixed idea that the temperature chart at the end of his bed was a sales graph, and the more peaks there were in it the better he was pleased, for he thought that at last the K. K. K. were beginning to fall for Tolstoy.

At any rate, he is much better now, and asks me to write to you for him. I must say that I think you picked a fine Advertising Manager for your Ginger Cubes: I have never seen such an enthusiastic fellow. The specimen drawings or car cards that you sent him are pinned up on a screen beside the bed, and he hardly takes his eyes off them. He has had all the nurses in the ward munching the Ginger Cubes, or Digestive Dice as he likes to call them, and is asking me to make a note of their opinions. He says he plans an interesting lay-out under the caption

COMMENTS OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION
ON THE GINGER CUBES

I must admit that I find the Cubes very tasty and refreshing.

To show you that he is really picking up, I will tell you that this morning he asked me to send out to the nearest newsstand for a number of magazines and papers, which he has been looking through with close attention.

But I must not deceive you. In spite of his enthusiasm he is still very weak, and it will take a lot of building up before his merchandising centres are up to par. It would do no harm if you were to send him some stimulating books to read, such as Orison Swett Marden or Dr. Crane.

By the way, Mr. Ribstone, someone in your office has made a mistake in addressing letters to this hospital, the name of which is not Hypocrites but Hippocrates; the spelling is nearly the same but the pronunciation is different, after the name of a famous doctor of old times. Now I must draw to an end, for the patient needs attention; this is a long letter but he wanted you to know all about him.

Yours sincerely,
CANDIDA CUMNOR.

IV

[*A telegram from the National Drug Novelties Company to Nicholas Ribstone.*]

Chicago, April 11, 1922.

Hear interesting rumour about new lozenge ginger cubes to be marketed by you would you

consider entrance of outside capital in this venture or sell outright trade name formula and goodwill believe you have a winner.

EDWARD GARTENBAUM,
President National Drug Novelties.

V

[*A telegram from Nicholas Ribstone, president of the Ginger Cubes Corporation, to Edward Gartenbaum of the National Drug Novelties Company.*]

Decline discuss selling interest in ginger cubes distribution plans perfected watch our smoke.

RIBSTONE.

VI

[*A memorandum sent to heads of departments of the National Drug Novelties Company, Chicago.*]

OFFICE BULLETIN No. 38946 (Series B).

Minutes of Conference Held in Directors' Room, April 12.

Mr. Gartenbaum reported that he had had a telegram from Ribstone declining assistance in financing the Ginger Cubes. Mr. Gartenbaum thought the matter important enough to warrant calling the directors together. Was it possible that Ribstone had access to new sources of capital hitherto unemployed in the drug trade? This

seemed unlikely in view of their own recent canvass. Mr. G. asked Mr. O'Keefe, who had just come back from New York, whether he had been able to find out anything definite about the plans for Ginger Cubes.

Mr. O'Keefe said that he had found the trade greatly interested in the rumours that had been current. It was said everywhere that Ribstone had got hold of a formula that was a knockout, and that the Ginger Cubes had caused more talk in pharmacist and confectionery circles than anything since the Smith Brothers sold their razors. He had not been able to get any very definite dope about the distribution plans, but it was common talk that Ribstone intended to spend half a million in the New York newspapers. He had heard that the Gray Matter Advertising Agency was to handle the account. Mr. O'Keefe said that Mr. Gray was an old friend of his, but going to Gray's office to inquire he found the reception room so choked with solicitors from the newspapers that he did not wait.

Mr. Oldham asked if this man Ribstone had had previous experience in the drug specialty line which would warrant their believing he could make a go of the so-called Ginger Cubes.

Mr. Gartenbaum said that Ribstone had had no experience in that field, so far as he knew, but that he was a very clever merchandiser and had

done big things with the Ribstone Memory Course several years ago.

Professor Devonshire of the laboratory department was called upon to ask if he had any idea what the formula of the Ginger Cubes might be, and whether it could be easily duplicated or improved. Professor Devonshire said that, speaking as a chemist, ginger had many possibilities as a popular drug staple, that its principal constituents are starch, volatile oil, and resin; that it has carminative and purgative values, especially for dyspepsia and flatulence, and is helpful for seasickness, headache, and toothache. He said that as soon as the Cubes themselves were on the market he could analyze them and suggest a variation in the formula.

Mr. O'Keefe said that he had tried to get hold of some of the Cubes, but that they were being carefully kept under cover. He believed that Ribstone's plans were still in the air until his advertising man, Russell, was out of hospital.

Mr. Gartenbaum asked if Mr. Russell was in hospital because he had been trying some of the Ginger Cubes.

Mr. Oldham said that he had been greatly impressed by the amount of gossip in the trade about the Ginger Cubes, but he believed the value of the thing lay not in any unique formula but in the cleverness of the name Ginger Cubes,

and particularly the additional name Digestive Dice.

Mr. Gartenbaum agreed and submitted it to the meeting that it would be well worth while to ride on Ribstone's effort by putting out a similar product with an equally catchy name. He instanced the way Eskimo Pie was followed immediately by a dozen imitations, all very nearly as successful.

Mr. Sombre of the Promotion Department asked if Mr. Gartenbaum had thought of any name as appealing as Ginger Cubes.

Mr. Gartenbaum admitted he hadn't, but said that his mind was working on this matter and the only thing he had thought of so far was Ginger Blocks.

Mr. Sombre said he thought that was too similar to Ginger Cubes and might mean legal proceedings.

Mr. O'Keefe suggested Tingling Squares.

After a good deal of discussion, Mr. Gartenbaum adjourned the meeting, ordering these minutes to be sent confidentially to heads of departments. Another conference to be held tomorrow at which suggestions for a rival name would be brought in.

By E. K. R.,
Stenographer.

VII

[*A letter from Allan Russell, Advertising Manager of the Ginger Cubes Corporation, to Nicholas Ribstone.*]

Hippocrates Hospital, April 14.

DEAR Boss, I'm still a bit seedy but am getting better every minute thanks to the care these "good people" have taken of me. This is my first letter and it will have to be short. Just wanted to say that if you still need an assistant in the office I'd like to recommend Miss Cumnor, one of the nurses here, who has been taking care of me. She is tired of the nursing job and wants to get into a "business position." Certainly she's a mighty capable girl and her medical knowledge would be of great value to us in marketing the Cubes. She is 23 years old and ambitious.

I'll be out of here pretty soon now, I hope, and am keen to get into the thick of the fight for the good old Cubes.

Yours always

RUSSELL.

VIII

[*A letter from Nicholas Ribstone to Allan Russell.*]

Ginger Cubes Corporation

Nicholas Ribstone, President,
Theodore Carbo, Vice-President,
Arthur MacCready, Treasurer,
Simon Haggard, Secretary
Allan Russell, Advertising Mgr.

Executive Offices
2216 Duane Street
New York

Cable Address:
Gincubes

April 14, 1922.

DEAR RUSSELL: Here are our letterheads. How do you like them? I am sending some to the hospital so you can use them for any letters you may need to write. Show them to the nurses and get their reaction. The more they circulate, the better.

This is just to tell you that I am going out of town for a little rest over the week-end. We have got things pretty well lined up so far. I shall be glad when you get back so we can visit together for I want your advice. You understand advertising men better than I do, I guess. To me, a great deal of their jargon is a mystery. What, for instance, do you think of the enclosed one that has just come to me from the Gray Matter Agency? Does it mean anything?

Miss Balboa, by the way, is somewhat upset by

a remark made by your Miss Cumnor, about our error in spelling the name of the Hospital. I'm afraid the mistake was due to my wrong pronunciation, which she misunderstood.

As ever,

NICHOLAS RIBSTONE.

N.R./D.B.
(Encl.)

IX

[*Enclosure, sent by Mr. Ribstone to Mr. Russell, being a letter from the Gray Matter Advertising Agency.*]

MY DEAR MR. RIBSTONE: Obviously you intend, ultimately at any rate, to have a nation-wide, or even world-wide, distribution for the Ginger Cubes. You are going to need a large merchandising staff. I wish to enlist your interest in our newly created Department of Salesmanizing. Let us train your representatives before they go on the road, and instil into the personnel just those qualities of enthusiasm and confidence that go to make not mere salesmen, but Ambassadors of Commerce.

I solicit the pleasure of convincing you on this topic; in the meantime let me briefly state the nutshell of our theory.

In our Salesmanizing School, which is really a kind of Graduate College of the Selling Arts, we

seek to drive out from the student all negative and minus thoughts, ideas of possible failure, business depression, etc., and to substitute robust energizing concepts, positive and plus in their nature. Many a man has come to us doubtful about his own selling abilities, doubtful about the general condition of trade, doubtful about economics and literature and even theology. When they leave us, after a three weeks' course under Mr. Harvey K. Tidaholm, they have pronounced convictions.

You wish to have your product—the Ginger Cubes—marketed swiftly, cleanly, universally. There are four steps in this process. The commodity must be

(1) Institutionalized
(2) Publicized
(3) Distributionized
(4) Internationalized

To bring this about, your representative personnel must be

(a) Humanized
(b) Stabilized
(c) Energized
} = SALESMANIZED

It is on such matters as these that Consumer Preference and Dealer Convictionability are based.

I should like very much to have our Mr. Harvey K. Tidaholm discuss this matter with you. I know that your reaction will be enthusiastic.

Yours faithfully,
GEO. W. GRAY,
Technical Director, Gray Matter Advertising Service.

X

[*A letter from Nicholas Ribstone to George W. Gray.*]

DEAR MR. GRAY: I am just leaving town for a few days rest. All decisions have been postponized until my advertising manager returns. He is now hospitalized. I will confer with you as soon as I am reurbanized.

Yours truly,
(Signed, in absence, with rubber stamp.)
NICHOLAS RIBSTONE.
N.R./D.B.

XI

[*An article in LOZENGE AND PASTILLE, the weekly trade journal of the throat tablet trade.*]

THE VALUE OF THE CUBICAL FORM FOR MEDICATED CANDIES

BY BEN F. MENTHOL,
Secretary of National Lozenge Men's Chamber of Commerce.

A great deal of talk has been roused in lozenge circles by the formation of the Ginger Cubes

Corporation, to manufacture and distribute a new product called the Ginger Cubes. Mr. Nicholas Ribstone, the head of the enterprise, while reticent as to details, admits that he hopes to spring a surprise on the world of bronchial tablets and breath-perfumers. We understand that the Ginger Cubes, while more in the general nature of a confection than a medical preparation, are based on a careful pharmacal formula, and will go before the public on an appeal at least partly therapeutic.

But what interests us is, that Mr. Ribstone's venture again brings up the necessity of standardizing the shape of the medicated sweet, if lozenge men are ever to get back to genuine prosperity. At present the lozenge and jujube world is in a state of wild disorder and lack of intelligent co-operation. Post-war deflation has not been followed by anything constructive. Lozenge men are cutting one another's throats instead of healing the public's. Mr. Ribstone, unconsciously, has put his finger on a vital spot in the lozenge industry.

Hitherto the trade has manufactured its products mainly in four shapes:

(1) Square tablet
(2) Round tablet
(3) Spherical
(4) Oval

It will be evident, however, that for close packing and neat appearance, the cube is undoubtedly an attractive shape. It is well worth consideration on the part of the trade whether a general adoption of the cube would not be advantageous. Moreover, a great economy could be effected by standardizing cartons and containers. How can the present debilitating fluctuations be ironed out while the whole industry is proceeding on a basis of mere individualism? We do not wish to disparage competition, which is the life of trade, but to advocate a higher form of coöperating competition. The lozenge trade owes it as a duty to humanity to take its part in the general stabilizing and soothing movement. The inflamed throat of Commerce can never be healed until lozenge men get together. There is no reason why the breath-sweetener clique should be so jealous of the digestive wing, both suspicious of larynx and bronchial men. We hope that at the convention in June these matters can be taken up and constructively dealt with.

XII

[*A letter from Mr. Gray of the Gray Matter Advertising Agency to Nicholas Ribstone, proprietor of the Ginger Cubes.*]

My dear Mr. Ribstone: I do not wish to seem too insistent, but I am so interested in the success

of the Ginger Cubes that I feel it is my duty to inform you of the tested methods in which prosperity has been attained by other manufacturers.

I am so confident of your eventually deciding to place your advertising account in our hands that I went ahead last week and had our Laboratory of Merchandising Survey conduct a preliminary clinic in the local field. Of course, you understand that you are not obligated in any way; but I felt that this was the most useful mode of helping you to envisage your problem.

Just a word about our Merchandising Survey work, which is headed by Mr. Henry W. Geniall. Mr. Geniall is a man who knows how to talk to dealers in their own language; he is a born sales engineer. He began selling in 1892 and has never stopped; though now he sells service instead of commodities. He is the author of a book which has run through fifteen editions, including the Scandinavian, entitled *How to Meet and Dominate Your Fellow Men*, an autographed copy of which I am having forwarded to you.

The principle of our Merchandising Survey is to conduct a preliminary investigation of markets, in a representative field and on the highest plane of detached observation. Our Merchandising Surveyors are not to be confused with the street men employed by the less professional agencies. Most of them are college graduates; they are so

tactful and genteel that they are welcomed by the dealers as valuable counsellors and coöperators; very often they are asked to stay to supper.

The survey we conducted shows conclusively that there is going to be a big market for Ginger Cubes if they are well publicized. We drew up the inclosed printed blank and questionnaired 100 druggists in the uptown section, just as a preliminary test. I have selected the inclosed at random from the returns, to show you the kind of thing. The others are being bound in a folder, which I will have much pleasure to lay before you on your return to the office, together with a tabulated analysis.

It is a pleasure to be able to put at your disposal all the resources of Gray Matter Service.

Faithfully yours,

GEO. W. GRAY.

Technical Director, Gray Matter Advertising Service.

XIII

[*Confidential Report of an interview with a druggist by a Merchandising Surveyor from the Gray Matter Advertising Agency.*]

INTERVIEW

Name—Higgly-Piggly Drug Store.
Address—673 Sunnyside Ave.

Type of Store—Chain.
Party Interviewed—J. K. Liquorice, Mgr.
Subject of Interview—Ginger Cubes Canvass.
Approachtalk Used—General Coöperation No. 3, as per Mr. Geniall's suggestion.

What Brands of the following Does Dealer Sell—(List in order of popularity):

Throat Tablets—Roko, Southern Soothers, Tussicules.
Cough Drops—Lady Larynx, Lotos Cone.
Confectionery Laxatives—Sugar Chew, Cascarilla.
Appetizer Lozenges—Paprika Pastilles, Curlicues.
Digestive Tablets—Stowaways, Cul de Sacs.
Medicated Candies—Sweeto, Spicy Chiplets, Candoids.
Breath Purifiers—Balmozone, Pineapple Hints, Clover Slices.

To What Does Dealer Attribute Success of These Best Sellers? Newspaper Advertising.

Does He Push Any Particular Brands? If so, Which? No Answer.

What Methods of Manufacturers' Promotion Produces Best Result for the Dealer? Newspaper Advertising.

What per cent. of his customers suffer from Sore Throat? Ten per cent. in winter.

What per cent. from bad digestion? No answer.

What per cent. from cacopneumonia (bad breath)? No answer.

What per cent. prefer a doctor's prescription to a patent medicine? Fifty per cent.

What Does Dealer think of prospects of Ginger Cubes? Excellent; thinks name very "catchy."

Does Dealer approve the subtitle "Digestive Dice"? Yes.

Will He Use Window Display Material? Sure.

General Remarks—Dealer suggests we investigate what effect the Ginger Cubes will have on smokers' tongue; says ginger bites the tongue after smoking, would not have percentage of ginger too powerful.

Name of Surveyor—Richmond Brown.

Analyzed by Henry W. Geniall.

XIV

[*A letter from Allan Russell, Advertising Manager of the Ginger Cubes Corporation, to his employer, Mr. Nicholas Ribstone.*]

Hippocrates Hospital, April 18.

Dear Boss: This is just to say that I am so much better I expect to get out of here in a few days, and hope to be back "on the job" next

week. Dr. Nichevo says that I have made surprising progress and thinks it is due to Miss Cumnor's fine care. She is certainly some nurse. She and I have gone over those papers you sent me, from the Gray Matter people, very carefully. Miss Cumnor's reaction is that we ought to go slow about signing up with them. She thinks, and I am inclined to agree with her, that they talk tripe. By the way, you didn't reply to my suggestion about our giving her a job in the office. She is certainly a remarkable woman.

Yours always,
RUSSELL.

XV

[*A letter from Mr. Nicholas Ribstone to his secretary, Miss Daisy Balboa.*]

Kill Kare Kountry Klub,
Wayanda, Conn., April 18.

DEAR MISS BALBOA: I have decided to stay here a few days longer for the fishing. Nothing much can be done in the office until Mr. Russell returns, and it just happens that one of the big drug jobbers is staying at this place and it will do no harm for me to get to know him in a social way. Thanks for telling me about the Gray Matter portfolio. I am interested to know that you are impressed by their enthusiasm. But every one is enthusiastic when they go out fishing for a big one.

Look here, instead of mailing the Gray Matter stuff, why not run up here with it yourself? I will get you a reservation at the Bonhomie Inn, which is near this club, and then we can go over the papers together. There's a train that leaves Grand Central at 4:20. The little change would do you good, and there are several matters on which I wish to get your reaction.

Sincerely yours,
NICHOLAS RIBSTONE.

XVI

[*A letter from Miss Balboa to Mr. Russell.*]

DEAR MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Ribstone is still away, but I am going up to the country this afternoon to take him some papers, including your letter of yesterday. We'll all be mighty glad to see you when you get back.

Faithfully yours,
DAISY BALBOA.

XVII

[*A letter from Mr. Gray, of Gray Matter Service, to Mr. Ribstone, proprietor of the Ginger Cubes.*]

MY DEAR MR. RIBSTONE: I was glad to get your note from Kill Kare Kountry Klub, and to hear that you have been taking a few days' recreation. You will return, I am confident, much re-

freshed and eager to take up the problems that confront us.

I have been a little disappointed at not getting a definite authorization from you to go ahead with our plans. We have had tentative advances from other possible clients in this same general field, but I have put them off, desiring not to take on any accounts that might possibly conflict with the Ginger Cubes. To be perfectly frank, the thing that has appealed to me about Ginger Cubes is the bully opportunity for public service in a big way, and the chance to institutionalize a product whose possibilities have filled the members of our organization with unusual enthusiasm.

Ever since we first began talking institutional advertising for Ginger Cubes, a real thought impression has been epitomizing itself in my mind, and our Department of Cumulative Service has been giving the matter special study and analytical constructive investigation. We have been going right back to fundamentals on this proposition, studying the different sides of the problem along all its different angles. It will indeed be a source of satisfaction if we are accorded the opportunity to work with you. Our Mr. Geniall was saying in conference yesterday, "I am convinced I would rather be associated with the Ginger Cubes Corporation than any other company I know of, because what I have heard of the

quality of men that make up that organization and the quality of service they would expect convinces me it would be an educative experience to coöperate with that firm. The product-attributes of their Ginger Cubes fill me with enthusiasm, and I feel that if they were our clients we could work for them as personal friends, and not in any cold-blooded businesslike fashion."

That is the way we want you, Mr. Ribstone, to feel towards our organization.

It is not our desire to merely build a number of advertisements which may be combined together in a more or less connected series by some such device as art treatment. Art is all very well as a handmaiden of advertising, but for a monumental campaign you need the inspiration of a Big Idea, a genuinely dominating thought that will clarionize every piece of copy and tie the whole together in a culminating increment of public consciousness.

Advertising is either Product-Advertising or Institutional-Advertising. The functions of the first are obvious—

A. Function is to sell product
B. Means of accomplishment are
    (1) Directly presenting the product to the market
    (2) Urging the market to accept the product

But Institutional-Advertising is far more psychological. Here enters the supreme function of the merchandising arts, to create consumer "goodwill." This may be defined as encouraging consumer-benevolence, that is, educating the public to a sense of subjective interest in the entire business, and a conscious awareness of benefit therefrom. A feeling of friendly satisfaction engendered by Knowledge, Understanding and Appreciation is the inception of this consumer-benevolence.

The various factors that jointly and severally enter into these great merchandising truths I will not insist upon. But it would give me great satisfaction if you and Mr. Russell would meet the members of our organization and talk the whole matter over frankly and fully. Mr. Russell and your good self and the writer ought to get together in the near future for a long, serious talk on the whole proposition. We could not do nearly so well for you if our headquarters were not in New York, where we can have daily intimate conference with your organization headquarters. Our psychological director for the Chicago Territory, Mr. Alfred Ampere, has been so stimulated by what he has heard of your plans, that he wires me asking to be transferred to New York if our proposition goes through. I am inclined to favour appointing him as chief contact man, so that he could be

summoned at any time within twenty minutes if a conference were called.

The objectives are all clearly defined, and we are ready to go to work. This is simply to assure you of my own personal appreciation of the splendid energy and fighting spirit your organization exhibits, and to hope that from the very inception of the Ginger Cubes we may be accorded an opportunity to coöperate in the public educationalization which is the real satisfaction of the advertising profession.

Cordially yours,
GEO. W. GRAY.
Technical Director, Gray Matter Advertising Agency.

XVIII

[*Story in the New York Lens, April 23, written by the star humorous reporter.*]

CUPID COMES TO DOCTORS' AID

HOSPITAL ROMANCE CULMINATES
IN PATIENT WEDDING
PRETTY NURSE

Allan Russell, advertising man, left Hippocrates Hospital yesterday afternoon, completely cured of a stubborn case of nervous debility that at first puzzled the doctors. With him, in a taxi-

cab, was Miss Candida Cumnor, one of the nurses, still in her uniform. They went to the Little Church Around the Corner and were married. After the ceremony, Mrs. Russell took her husband's temperature with a clinical thermometer. It was Centigrade A, or whatever the normal reading is. She did not test his pulse, which was probably excusably fluttered. Even a hardened reporter, who horned in on this story by accident, was stirred by the sight of the bride in her crisp white linen. She has golden-bronzy hair and indigo eyes, or they looked that way in the twilight of the church. But what's the use? She is now Mrs. Russell.

During Mr. Russell's illness Miss Candida had charge of the case. She sympathized with his business problem—Dr. Nichevo, the Hippocrates expert on nervous mechanics, said that he had been run down by too constant intercourse with advertising agencies. She took his temperature soothingly with that cold little glass tube. But what she took away with one hand she gave back with the other. When her palm floated like a water-lily across his commerce-heated brow his mind grew calm, but his heart was caloric. As he became stronger she assisted him with advertising layouts which were spread on the bed, and they pored over them together. Why is it, we wonder, that reporters never have time to be taken ill?

Mr. Russell is Advertising Manager of the Ginger Cubes Corporation. He and his wife expect to spend their honeymoon hunting an apartment.

"Cupid is the best doctor," said Mr. Russell as they left the church. "I intend to keep the thermometer as a souvenir."

XIX

[*A letter from Nicholas Ribstone, proprietor of the Ginger Cubes, to Allan Russell.*]

Bonhomie Inn, April 23.

DEAR RUSSELL: Forgive my delay in writing, but I have exciting news for you. Miss Balboa and I have decided to get married. You know that I have always felt we laboured under a handicap in not being able to get disinterested feminine reaction on the Cubes. Miss Balboa's excellent sense will be a great help. I dare say you will be surprised —I am, myself. I had thought I was too old to become a Benedictine, but Miss Balboa has quite carried me off my feet. I must not be sentimental, however. We are going to be married here, tomorrow, very quietly.

I should have written to you before about Miss Cumnor. I thought rather well of your suggestion, but Miss Balboa has convinced me that it is better not to add to our staff just now, at any rate until we get things going.

I'm sending this to the office, as I guess you have left the hospital by now. Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Ribstone will be back in a few days.

Yours always,
NICHOLAS RIBSTONE.

XX

[*Another letter from Mr. Ribstone.*]

Bonhomie Inn, April 24.

DEAR RUSSELL: Just got your wire. Congratulations. It reaches me on the brink of the altar myself. My Lord, man, you should have tipped me off beforehand. It wasn't necessary for both of us to get married in order to get wifely reactions on the Cubes. If I had known sooner—but anyhow, it's all arranged now.

Miss Balboa has just about convinced me that we will do well to accept Gray Matter's proposition. I wish I could consult you about this. Perhaps you had better get in touch with Gray and have the papers ready for signing when I get to the office.

We can exchange wedding presents later on. At the moment I'm too flustered to know just what happens next.

Yours, from the jumping-off place,
NICHOLAS RIBSTONE.

XXI

[*A letter from Allan Russell to an old friend, known to us only as Bob.*]

DEAR BOB: There's the devil to pay in this office. I've just heard that old Ribstone has married Miss Balboa, his stenographer, in order to get her unbiassed reactions on business. Now I know very well that Candida and Mrs. Balboa-Ribstone will never get on together. This Balboa person, for instance, has argued old Rib into believing that the Gray Matter stuff is real. Candida doesn't fall for it, says it's the bunk. I won't go on as Ad. Mgr. if Ribstone accepts the Gray Matter contract. I just want to ask you if there's anything in your office that I could take a hand in. You know my experience and qualifications. Let me have a line.

Yrs. in haste,

A. R.

XXII

[*An editorial in LOZENGE AND PASTILLE.*]

We hear that Nicholas Ribstone, of the Ginger Cubes Corporation, has sold out his entire interest in the much-touted Cubes to the National Drug Novelties Company. This comes as quite a surprise to the trade, as no specialty in recent years had

aroused so much advance interest as the Ginger Cubes. The figure paid by National Drug Novelties for the formula, stock in hand, and jobbing contracts already arranged, is said to be half a million dollars. We await with interest to hear just how Gartenbaum and his associates will develop this property. In the meantime the affair suggests some meditations on the desirability of guarding the medicated confectionery industry against the machinations of mere adventurers and speculators.

(Walk, Not Run,
to Nearest Exit)

THE EDITOR AT THE BALL GAME

(WORLD'S SERIES OPENING, 1922)

AT THE Polo Grounds yesterday $119,000 worth of baseball was played. Of that, however, only a meagre $60,000 or so went to the players. We wonder how much the accumulated sports writers got for writing about it. They are the real plutocrats of professional athletics.

We have long intimated our inflexible determination to learn how to be a sports writer—or, as he is usually called, a Scribe. This is to announce progress. We are getting promoted steadily. In the 1920 World's Series we were high up in the stand. At the Dempsey-Carpentier liquidation we were not more than a parasang from the ring. We broke into the press box at the 1921 World's Series, but only in the rearward allotments assigned to correspondents from Harrisburg and Des Moines.

But our stuff is beginning to be appreciated. We are gaining. Yesterday we found ourself actually

below the sacred barrier—in the Second Row, right behind the Big Fellows. Down there we were positively almost on social terms (if we had ventured to speak to them) with chaps like Bill McGeehan and Grant Rice and Damon Runyon and Ring Lardner. Well, there are a lot of climbers in the world of sporting literature.

One incident amused us. We heard a man say, "Which one is Damon Runyon?" "Over there," said another, pointing. The first, probably hoping to wangle some sort of prestige, made for Mr. Runyon. "Hullo, Damon!" he cried genially. "Remember me?"

It must have been Pythias.

So far we have only been allowed to shoot in a little preliminary patter—what managing editors call "human interest stuff." When the actual game starts they take the wire away from us, quite rightly, and turn it over to the experts. But, being inexorably ambitious, we sit down now, after the game is over, to tell you exactly how we saw it. Because we had a unique opportunity to study a great journalist and see exactly how it's done. It was just our good luck, sitting in the second row. The second sees better than the first—it's higher. You have to use your knee for writing desk, and you have to pull up your haunches every few minutes to let by the baseball editor of the Topeka *Clarion* on his way back to Harry Stevens'

Gratis Tiffin for another platter of salad. But the second row gave us our much needed opportunity to watch the leaders of our craft.

It was just before the game began. The plump lady in white tights (a little too opulent to be Miss Kellermann, but evidently a diva of some sort) was about to begin the walking race around the bases against the athletic-looking man. She won, by the way—what a commutrix she would make. Suddenly we recognized a very Famous Editor climbing into the seat directly in front of us. He was followed by two earnest young men. One of these respectfully placed a Noiseless typewriter in front of the Editor, and spread out a thick pile of copy paper.

This young man had shell spectacles and truncated side-whiskers. Both young men were plainly experts, and were there to tell the Editor the fine points of what was happening. The Famous Editor's job was to whale it out on the Noiseless, with that personal touch that has made him (it has been said) the most successful American newspaper man.

This, we said to ourself, is going to be better than any Course in Journalism.

We admired the Editor for the competent businesslike way he went to work. He wasted no time in talking. After one intent glance round through very brightly polished spectacles, he

began to tick—to "file," as we professionals say. Already, evidently, he felt the famous "reactions" coming to him. He looked so charmingly scholarly, like some well-loved college professor, we could not help feeling it was just a little sad to see him taking all this so seriously. He never paused to enjoy the scene (it really is a great sight, you know), but pattered along on the keys like a well-trained engine.

The two young men fed him facts; with austere and faintly indignant docility he turned these into the well-known pseudo-philosophic comment. It was beautifully efficacious. The shining, well-tended typewriter, the plentiful supply of smooth yellow paper, the ribbon printing off a clear blue, these were right under our eyes; we couldn't help seeing the story rolling out though most of the time we averted our eyes in a kind of shame. It seemed like studying the nakedness of a fine mind.

"Jack Dempsey's coming in," said the young man. Or, "Babe Ruth at bat." The Editor was too busy to look up often. One flash of those observant (and always faintly embittered, we thought) eyes could take in enough to keep the mind revolving through many words. "I'll take them, and correct the typographical errors," remarked young Shellspecs, gathering up the Editor's first page. Thereafter the Editor passed over his story in "takes" and young Shellspecs copyread it with a blue

pencil. Once the Editor said, a little tartly: "Don't change the punctuation." From Shellspecs the pages went smoothly to the silent telegraph operator who sat between them.

Our mind—if we must be honest—was somewhat divided between admiration and pity. Here, indeed, is slavery, we said to ourself, watching the great man bent over his work. Babe Ruth came to the plate. Judge Landis is named after a mountain, but Ruth looks like one. There was pleasant dramatic quality in the scene: the burly, gray figure swinging its bat, the agile and dangerous-looking Mr. Nehf winding up for delivery, the twirl of revolving arms against a green background, the flashing, airy swim of the ball, the turbine circling of the bat, the STRIKE sign floating silently upon the distant scoreboard . . . but did the Editor have time to savour all this? Not he! One quick wistful peer upward through those clear lenses, he was back again on his keyboard—the Noiseless keyboard carrying words to the noisiest of papers.

And yet, we had to insist, here was also genius of a sort. The swiftness with which he translated it all into a rude, bright picture! But he was going too consciously on high, we thought. Proletarianizing it, fitting the scene into his own particular scheme of thinking, instead of genuinely puzzling out its suggestions. He was honest enough to

admit that the game itself was mostly rather dull —and in so far he was much above most of the Sporting Writers, those high-spirited lads who come back from a quite peaceable game and lead you to believe that there have been scenes of thunder and earthquake.

But, like most of us, he tended to exaggerate those things he had decided upon beforehand. He made much of the roaring of the crowd—which, after all, was not violent as crowds go; and he wrote cheerily of the bitterness of hatred manifested towards the umpires, the deadly glances of players questioning close decisions. He seemed to view these matters through a pupil dilated with intellectual belladonna (if that's what belladonna does).

He wrote something about the perfect happiness of the small boy who was the Giant mascot. Heaven, he said, would have to be mighty good to be better than this for that urchin. But to us the boy seemed totally calm, even sombre. What does baseball mean to him? More interesting, and more exact, we thought, would have been to note the fluctuating sounds of the spectators; a constant rhythm of sound and silence—the hush as the pitcher winds up, the mixed surge of comment as the ball flicks across, the sudden unanimous outcry at some dramatic stroke. Or the ironical cadenced clapping and stamping that break out

spontaneously at certain recognized moments of suspense.

But the Editor was going strong, and we felt a kind of admiring affection for him as we saw him so true to form. He picked reactions out of the ether, hit them square on the nose, and whaled them to Shellspecs. Shellspecs recorded faultless assists, zooming them in to Western Union.

In the third inning the Editor hoisted a paragraph clean over the heads of the bleachers by quoting the Bible. Mr. Bush, the red-sleeved Yankee pitcher, was at bat and lifted a midfield fly. Bancroft made a superb tergiversating catch going at full speed. It was beautifully done.

For the second time, we thought, history has been made in America by a Bancroft. "The human body is a wonderful machine," ticked the busy Editor. We watched Mr. Bancroft more carefully after that. A small agile fellow, there was much comeliness in the angle of his trunk and hips as he leaned forward over the plate, preparing for the ball.

In the fourth inning the Editor was already at page 13 of his copy. The young man with truncated side-whiskers then drew the rebuke for inserting commas into the story. The other young man, sitting behind, kept volleying bits of Inside Stuff. Scott came to bat. "This fellow," said Inside Stuff, "is known as the Little Iron Man;

he's played in one thousand consecutive games." This was faithfully relayed to the Editor by Shellspecs, and went into the story. But the Editor changed it to "almost a thousand." This pleased us, for we also felt a bit skeptical about that item.

By this time, having noted the quickness of the Editor at "reactionizing," we were very keen to get something of our own into his story. An airplane came over. Inside Stuff announced that the plane was taking pictures to be delivered in Cleveland in time for the morning papers. How he knew this, we can't guess—very likely he didn't. This also faithful Shellspecs passed on. The plane was a big silvery beauty—we remarked, loudly, to our neighbour that she looked as though made of aluminum. A moment later the Editor, having handed a page to Shellspecs, said: "Add that the plane was aluminum." Shellspecs wrote down in blue pencil: "It's an aluminum flying machine." But we mustn't be unjust. Very likely the Editor got the reaction just as we did. It was fairly obvious.

Sixth Inning—The Editor hit a hot twisting paragraph to the outposts of his syndicate, but troubled Shellspecs by saying—Mr. Whitey Witt's name having been mentioned—"Is he a Yankee or a Giant?" "He's an albino, has pink eyes," volunteered indefatigable Inside Stuff. The flying keys caught it and in it went, somewhat

philosophized: "Lack of pigment in hair, skin and retina seems not to diminish his power." Inside Stuff: "It's the beginning of the Seventh and they're all stretching. It's the usual thing." But no stretching for the Editor. He goes on and on. Twenty pages now. When his assistants put a fact just where he likes it his quick mind knocks it for five million circulation.

"Stengel, considered a very old man in baseball," says the cheery mentor. "He's thirty-one years old." To none of these suggestions does the Editor make any comment. He wastes no words—orally, at least. He knows what he wants—sifts it instanter.

We left at the end of the Eighth. The Editor was still going strong. He didn't see the game, but we think he was happy in his own way.

We hope we haven't seemed too impertinent. We want to be a Scribe—not a Pharisee. But our interest in the profession is greater than our regard for any merely individual sanctity. We've given you a faithful picture of what has been called supreme success in journalism. Take a good look at it, you students of newspapers, and see how you like it. We'll tell you a secret. It's pretty easy, if that's the sort of thing you hanker for. In a way, it's rather thrilling. But (between ourselves) it's also a Warning.

GISSING JOINS A COUNTRY CLUB

A NUMBER of our clients have been asking for news of Haphazard Gissing, the Synthetic Dog. Since we have always been so candid with our patrons, we shall have to tell the unvarnished story of the latest surprising chapter in that romantic animal's career.

We say it with reluctance, and we say it with unfeigned sadness: we have had to deport Gissing. Admirable creature though he was, active, agile (you should have seen him play catch with a rubber ball), sonorous at night when he suspected alien footstep, highly intelligent and not devoid of a rude houndish comeliness—with all these gifts, he was not congenial among children. We do not know whether it was due to some dark strain of philosophy in him that rendered him too introspective to understand the ways of juveniles, or whether it was a blend of hot cavalier jealousy —at any rate, he never seemed able to unbend properly among the extremely young. The terror

that he inspired in icemen and tinsmiths could be countenanced, but when he bristled and showed his teeth at neighbouring children something had to be done. It was the familiar problem of literature and life: here is an amiable creature, well beloved, possessed (by some kink of breeding) with an unexorcisable deviltry. We can leave it at that, and not harmonize the theme with sentimental arpeggios.

Of course the first thing to be done was to find a good home for the exile. We consulted Dr. Rothaug, the kindly veterinarian of Sea Cliff, at whose establishment Gissing took a cultural course last winter. Dr. Rothaug told us of a farmer in that pretty suburb of Glen Cove which is miscalled Skunk's Misery, who was said to be looking for a fierce watch-dog to guard his chickens. Thither we went, and found the farmer milking at a barn on the lonely hillside. But just the night before he had been given a tramp collie. We liked the look of the farm at Skunk's Misery; it was the kind of place where Gissing would have been well content, but the farmer said that one dog was enough. That night, very late, we let Gissing indoors, and shared a Last Supper with him at the icebox. Perhaps we shall remember that he seemed just a little surprised at the beef-bone and the arrowroot biscuits spread with Roquefort cheese. Well, we said to ourself defensively, he was always

fond of Roquefort; there's only a scrap of it left; and very likely he'll never taste it again.

We refuse to be stampeded into any sentiment about this matter; we always thought that Gissing, as he matured, was developing a touch of the Thomas Hardy fatalism; he would be annoyed if we tried to over-dramatize this incident.

The next day the whole family was mustered to pay parting honours; all hands were embarked in Dame Quickly; the condemned dog ate a hearty breakfast, and with a bight of clothesline about his neck was escorted to the chariot, his long unused hawser having vanished since the Urchin used it to moor a full-rigged ship to a neighbouring sapling. By this time the victim had suspected something amiss; his deeply stricken cider-coloured eye was painfully interrogative. The Dame, however, seemed to us a trifle heartless. Off she went, her cylinders drumming with their usual alacritous smoothness. To a wedding or a funeral, all one to her. Gissing, now probably reviewing inwardly the tale of his errors (there must have been many of which we are ignorant: we never did know where he went on those long daily expeditions) was (we are pleased to record it) too honourable to attempt any insincere repentances. He kept climbing into the laps of his guardians, but the ironist insists that this was not all affection, but rather that the

vibration of the floorboards tickled his pads. There was an occasional secret caress, both given and taken, but we know our clients are too stiff in the bosom to want to hear about such matters. The younger generation, in the back seat, were eager to see the country club that Gissing was going to join. So had the matter been explained to them.

Across those autumn-tinted fields of central Long Island—all colours of pink and fawn and panther with the weathered shrivelling corn-shocks like old ghost-Indian tepees, and the pumpkins bright in the stubble—we proceeded to the Bide-a-Wee Home, which lies tucked away in the woods near Wantagh. This place had been to us only a name, and indeed we knew not exactly what to expect. Great was our pleasure to find a charming old farmhouse with great barns and outhouses, and an immediate clamour from hundreds of dogs running gayly in fenced inclosures, and lesser dogs, both hale and cripple, about the yard. Gissing hopped out blithely: his tail lifted sharply over his back, feathering downward as it curved: the warm October air, one supposes, came to him sharply barbed with the aromas of innumerable congenials. He was very much alive, and walked nimbly on cushion toes. Holding the rope, we walked among the barns, saluted by prodigious applause from all sides.

Even an inclosure full of cats showed gracious interest. The conclusion drawn by the Younger Generation was that Gissing's friends were glad to see him. Then came a genial curator, Gissing was led to a wire gate, and introduced into an orchard plot among about thirty more or less his own size. There was a good deal of bristling and growling, but he stood his ground calmly while a dozen or so of his new clubmates inquired into his credentials.

We had been somewhat troubled by the sign-board of the Bide-a-Wee, which calls itself a Home for Friendless Animals. We wished to impress upon the curator that Gissing was far from friendless, but we soon found that the legend on the board was inaccurate. Many very well-loved animals go there, for one reason or another; the organization tries to find a suitable home for all the beasts in its care; the name and characteristics of each are entered in a ledger when it arrives, and, if he so desires, the previous owner is notified when the animal goes to its new home. We were pleased to learn also that much of the broken bread from the Waldorf and Vanderbilt Hotels is shipped out to the Bide-a-Wee; so, if you are lunching there and don't finish your roll, perhaps Gissing will get it. (He is particularly fond of the crescent-shaped ones, with little black specks on them.) The Home is supported by voluntary contribution. In the

record book we inscribed Gissing's biography very briefly:

GISSING: *origin doubtful: two years old: has always had a good home. A fine watch-dog, but not good with children.*

We would have liked to go on, for much more might have been said. We would have liked to tell the friendly curator that this very week (by the quaint irony of circumstance) a book is to be published of which Gissing—somewhat transformed—is the hero. But we thought it best not to mention this, lest it get around among the other members and they taunt Gissing about it. We were happy to leave him in so congenial and friendly a home. And if any of our clients happen to need a good dog for a lonely country place—a dog who is perhaps too intellectual and excitable for children, but a tocsin of excellent acoustic strength—there you'll find him. He has promised to write to the Urchiness, provided she eats her cereal a little faster.

As we left, Gissing was standing on his hind legs looking through the fence. He wailed just a little. It would be less than justice (to both sides) not to admit it. Like Milton's hero leaving the Garden, "a few natural tears he shed, but dried them soon." As the friendly curator said, "By to-morrow he'll think he's lived here all his life." On the way

home, there being more room in the Dame, a supply of cider was laid in for consolation. Last night it seemed just a little strange to visit the ice-box all alone. To-morrow, perhaps, we shall take lunch at the Waldorf.

THE RETURN TO TOWN

IT WAS with somewhat a heavy heart that we prepared to leave Salamis for the winter. Yet inscrutable lust of adventure spurred us on; the city, also, is the place for work. In the country one is too comfortable, and there are too many distractions. Either cider, or stars, or the blue sparkle of the furnace fire—all these require frequent attentions. But it was hard to part with Long Island's charms in November, loveliest of months. The copper-coloured woods, the chrysanthemums, the brisk walk to the morning train, the yellow crackle of logs in the chimney, the chill dry whisper of the neighbouring belt of trees heard at midnight from an airy veranda—these are some of the excitements we shall miss. Most of all, perhaps, that stony little unlit lane, traversed in pitch darkness towards supper time, until, coming clear of the trees, you open up the Dipper, sprawled low across the northern sky.

It was hard, too, to leave Salamis just when its winter season of innocent gayeties was commencing. You would hardly believe how much is

going on! Did you know that that deathless old railroad station is being (as they say of ships) reconditioned? And there's going to be a drug store in Salamis Heights. The new Methodist church is nearly finished—and, most glamorous of all, we now have an actual tea-room at the entrance to the Salamis Estates. When you are motoring out that way you can see if we don't speak the truth. In another five years, most likely, we shall have street lights along our lonely wood road to Green Escape—and pavements—and gas to cook with. But there never will be quite as many fairies in the woods as there have been these past three years.

But, perhaps fortunately, the day set for moving into town was wet and drizzly. And the labour of piling into Dame Quickly various baggages, hampers, toys, a go-cart, and the component railings, girders, rods, springs and mattresses of two cribs was lively enough to oust from the mind any pangs of mere sentiment. The mind of one who has accomplished that task, in shirt-sleeves under a dripping weather, is heated enough to make him ready for any sort of adventurous foray. The Dame, also, grossly overloaded, and travelling smartly on greasy ways, was skiddish. As is ever our fortune, we found the road through Astoria torn up for repairs. This involved a circuit along a most horrible bypath, where our ill-adjusted

freight leaped crazily with every lurch, go-cart and mattresses descended on our neck, and the violence of the bumping caused the crib-girders to burst through the rear of the Dame's canopy. Also we incurred, and probably deserved, a stern rebuke from a gigantic policeman on Second Avenue. To tell the truth, in a downshoot of rain and peering desperately through a streaming wind-shield, we did not know he was a policeman at first. We thought he was an L pillar.

Yet, when both voyages were safely accomplished—one for the baggage, and one for the household: it would be harder to say which lading was the tighter squeeze—what an exhilaration to move once more in the city of our adoring. It is true that we began by making an immediate enemy in the apartment house, for, as we were quite innocently taking a trunk upstairs in the elevator, assisted by the cheerful elderly attendant, a lady living in the same house entered by chance and burst into violent reproach because *her* baggage had had to go aloft in the freight elevator. She accused the attendant of favouritism to which he, quite placidly, explained that this particular baggage had been delivered at the front door in a private car. This compliment to the Dame pleased us, but knowing nothing of the rules, and being wet and pensive, we pretended to be an expressman and said naught. The only

other shock was when we took the Dame to a neighbouring garage to recuperate for a few days. (We were glad, then, it had been raining, for the well-loved vehicle looked very sleek and shiny, and it was too dark for the garage man to notice the holes in her top. We wouldn't want him to sneer at her, and his garage, we observed, was full of very handsome cars.) When he said it would cost the Dame $1.50 a night to live there we were a little horrified. That, we reflected, was what we used to pay ourself at the old Continental Hotel in Philly, the inn where the Prince of Wales (the old one) and Dickens and Lincoln and others stayed. We now look with greater and greater astonishment at all the cars we see in New York. How can any one afford to keep them?

We were dispatched to do some hasty marketing, in time for supper. We made off to our favourite shopping street—Amsterdam Avenue. Delightedly we gazed into those alluring windows. In a dairy, a young lady of dark and appealing loveliness made us welcome. When we ordered milk and laid in a stock of groceries, making it plain to her (by consulting a list) that we were speaking on behalf of the head of the house, she urged us to advise Titania to open an account. Money she seemed loath to accept; it could all be paid for at the end of the month, she said. It is well to shop referring perplexedly to a little list. This

proves that you are an humble, honest paterfamilias, acting only under orders. To such credit is always lavish, and fair milkmaids generously tender.

Various tradesmen in that neighbourhood were surprised, in the tail end of a wet and depressing day, by unexpected increments of traffic. "Just nick the bone?" inquired the butcher, when, from our list, we read him the item about rib lamb chops. "Yes, just nick the bone," we assented, not being very definite on the subject. We were interested in admiring the thick sawdust on the floor, very pleasant to slide the foot upon. The laundryman was just closing when we arrived with our bundle. "Here's a new customer for you," we announced. Whatever private sorrows he has were erased from his manly forehead. He told us that he also does tailoring. Cleaning and pressing, he insisted. We had a private feeling, a little shameful, that he hasn't got as good a customer as he imagines. Next door to the tailor, by the way, and right opposite the apartment house, is a carpenter who advertises his skill at bookshelves.

How different it is from Salamis nights. Hanging out of the kitchen window (having gone to the rear of the apartment to see what the icebox is like: it's a beauty)—instead of Orion's Belt and the dry rustle of the trees, we see those steep walls of lighted windows, discreetly blinded, hear sudden

shrills of music from above and below. Just through the wall, as we lie abed, we can hear the queer droning whine of the elevator; through the open window, the clang of trolleys on Broadway. Hunting through the books that belong in the furnished apartment, after startling ourself by reading Mr. D. H. Lawrence's poems called *Look! We Have Come Through!* we found an old Conan Doyle—always our favourite bedtime author. *The Adventures of Gerard*, indeed, and we are going to have a go at it immediately.

Yes, it's very different from Salamis; but Adventure is everywhere, and we like to take things as we find them. We have never been anywhere yet, whether in the steerage of the *Mauretania* or in a private lunchroom at the Bankers' Club, where there wasn't more amusement than we deserved.

BUDDHA ON THE L

IN FRANK SHAY'S bookshop we found *A Buddhist Catechism*, by Subhadra Bhikshu. We have never known much about the Buddha—so little, in fact, that we thought that was his name. (His name was Prince Siddhartha Gotama.) But we have always felt that he was a kinsprit.

We opened the book at random and the first thing we saw was:

95. *Did not the Buddha give us any information concerning the first beginning and ultimate destiny of the Universe?*

No;

96. *Did he know nothing about it?*

He knew, but he taught us nothing.

There was a subtlety about that that pleased us greatly. It reminded us of a Chinese mandarin of our acquaintance who says that the universe was Dictated but not Signed. Immediately we forked out $1.25 to Frank Shay and took the book.

Frank was so pleased to sell a book (business is said to be at a very meagre pulse in Greenwich Village in midsummer) that he at once responded by buying our lunch. We retorted generously enough by buying a copy of Anatole France's *L'Ile des Pingouins*, which we have been hearing about for ten years or so. We were interested to note that our copy is the "Cent Quatre-Vingt-Sixième Edition." Considering the book was published only fourteen years ago, that seems good progress.

Coming back downtown on the L we went at Buddha hard and with great satisfaction. We learned that Buddha is not a name but means a state of mind, or Enlightenment. We learned the answers to the following questions:

129. *Why has the upright and just man often so much to suffer here on earth?*
130. *How is it that the wicked and unjust man often enjoys pleasures and honours?*
118. *What is a meritorious action?*
109. *Why is not a layman able to reach Nirvana?*

We can hear you clamouring to know the answers to these exciting questions; they are right here before us; but our duty is not to solve problems, only to propound them.

But you must get it clearly in your minds that the Buddha is not a God. The Buddhist Catechism

expressly rejects "a personal God-Creator," and "distinctly denies the doctrine of a creation out of nothing. Everything owes its origin and development to its own inherent vitalism, or, what comes to the same, its own will to live." The Buddha was not a God, but "a man far superior to ordinary men, one of a series of self-enlightened sublime Buddhas, who appear at long intervals in the world, and are morally and spiritually so superior to erring, suffering mankind, that to the childlike conceptions of the multitude they appear as Gods or Messiahs."

This is all tremendously exciting and leads to many pure and thrilling speculations that are much too honourable to pursue here. They would get us into horrible trouble, we feel sure. Indeed we are not at all certain whether both Frank Shay and ourself are not already subject to possible legal duress for vending and discussing so dangerous a book. But a noble analogy occurs to us which we venture with humility. Charley Chaplin is a great comedian. But the simple-minded drama critics are not content to leave it at that. They will have it (although it is now *vieux jeu*) that he is really a Great Tragic Artist. And so the tradition will go down to posterity that he was a Secret Hamlet, an Edgar Poe in clown's trousers. Charley himself, finding that his intellectual disciples insist upon this, perhaps acquiesces in the idea.

Only by doing so, he may feel, can he get his stuff across.

It is really very astonishing; at this moment our Employer brings in to us a letter he has had from a publisher, which begins:

Do you agree with me that there is a need for a book on the fundamentals of public opinion, for a book that will endeavour to define the new profession of public relations counsel, its scope and its functions and its relations specifically to the press and to the public generally?

A Public Relations Counsel, of course, is simply the post-war name for a Press Agent. But we mustn't be ribald. The press agent, if conscientious, may contribute a valuable function. We ourself have worked as a free-lance Press Agent for George Fox, Sir Thomas Browne, Herman Melville, Thoreau, Lao-Tse, Pearsall Smith, and various other people who have seemed to us to have the Right Idea. But one of the troubles is that there have been (and always will be) a lot of unauthorized Public Relations Counsels who get the ear of the crowd and limn upon the great canvas of the public a portrait of the Prophet which is very different from what that poor dreamer himself may have wished. Even the humblest of authors has frequently cursed the publisher's man who writes the copy for his book-jacket. If you want a really pregnant speculation, weigh in your mind

how many Public Relations Counsels there have been in the world of religion, and how amazingly they have interpreted and toned down the simple dissolvents of the founders of their creeds.

C. E. Montague, in *Disenchantment*, puts it beautifully:

> Ever since those disconcerting bombs [i.e., *the words of Christ*] were originally thrown courageous divines and laymen have been rushing in to pick them up and throw them away, combining as well as they could an air of respect for the thrower with tender care for the mental ease of congregations occupied generally in making money and occasionally in making war. Yet there they lie, miraculously permanent and disturbing, as if just thrown. Now and then one will go off, with seismic results, in the mind of some St. Francis or Tolstoy.

The Buddha, sitting under his Bo Tree (*ficus religiosa*—and it is fairly obvious why so many philosophers have chosen fig trees to sit under; a really lusty fig will bear, according to the New International Encyclopædia, three crops of fruit in a season, thus keeping the eremite well fed; and a fig, L. E. W. says, is what he doesn't give for the ideas of rival magi) is to us an enviable vision. We wonder how his meditations would have fared if there had been a telephone at the foot of the tree.

The only drawback, as far as we are concerned, to becoming a Buddhist is the vow to abstain from

intoxicating liquors. In this respect the Western religions seem to us more liberal. We have meditated long and earnestly on the subject and still have never been able to understand why an occasional exhilarating drink should be contrary to any wise man's ethic. Indeed, if Nirvana (or Perfect Release from Struggle) is the object of life, we have seen it well attained by three or four juleps or Tom-and-Jerries. The lay Buddhist has to take five vows; the Bhikshus (or Brotherhood of the Elect) take ten. Some of these additional vows required of the Bhikshu are:

I vow and promise not to eat food at unseasonable times —that is, after the midday meal.

I vow and promise not to dance, sing light songs, frequent public amusements, and, in short, to avoid worldly dissipation of every kind.

I vow and promise not to wear any kind of ornament, nor to use any scents or perfumes, and, in short, to avoid whatever tends to vanity.

I promise and vow to give up the use of soft bedding and to sleep on a hard, low couch.

These, we admit, present some difficulties. Frequenting "public amusements" offers too many opportunities for quibble. In one sense every possible mingling with the world is a public amusement. If there is anything more amusing than a smoking car full of men or a Broadway pavement

at lunch time we don't know what it would be. Sleeping on a hard, low couch is easy enough—we can sleep anywhere with equal satisfaction, even on the floor. The queer thing that we always notice about every kind of moral code is that, sooner or later, it begins to lose sight of the distinction between essentials and non-essentials. Such matters as intoxicating drink and public amusements should not be (for the Western philosopher) subject to prescriptive legislation. The individual may very rightly impose restraints upon himself in non-essential matters; but to lay them upon him from above is to stultify the whole purport of ethics—which, if we understand it, is to encourage and develop a worthy personal will. And the Buddhist Catechism recognizes this in a very potent phrase—"Every one of us must become his own redeemer."

But Buddhism seems to have a firm grasp on one very essential and valuable idea, which is comparatively rare among religions. Thus the Catechism:

43. *Does Buddhism teach its followers to hate, despise, or persecute non-believers?*

Quite the reverse. It teaches us to love all men as brethren, without distinction of race, nationality, or creed; to respect the convictions of men of other beliefs, and to be careful to avoid all religious controversy. The

Buddhist religion is imbued with the purest spirit of perfect toleration. Even where dominant, it has never oppressed or persecuted non-believers, and its success has never been attended with bloodshed. The true Buddhist does not feel hatred, but only pity and compassion for him who will not acknowledge or listen to the truth, to his own loss and injury only.

Of course, all forms of human attempt to unscrew the inscrutable are fascinating and full of interest. The Westerner, however, is a bit troubled when he finds "Love of life on earth" listed among the "ten fetters" which, according to the Buddha, prevent the soul from receiving full freedom and enlightenment. That seems, to our earth-bound and muddied conceptions, a shabby doctrine. Even the most timid tincture of good manners suggests that a life so exciting, so amusing, so painful, so perplexing, and so variously endowed with unearned beauty and amazement deserves at least a courteous gratefulness on our part. Mr. C. E. Montague (if you will allow us to quote him once more), explains what we mean:

Among the mind's powers is one that comes of itself to many children and artists. It need not be lost, to the end of his days, by any one who has ever had it. This is the power of taking delight in a thing, or rather in anything, everything, not as a means to some other end, but just because it is what it is. . . . A child in the full health of his mind will put his hand flat on the

summer turf, feel it, and give a little shiver of private glee at the elastic firmness of the globe. He is not thinking how well it will do for some game or to feed sheep upon. . . . No matter what the things may be, no matter what they are good or no good for, there they are each with a thrilling unique look and feel of its own, like a face; the iron astringently cool under its paint, the painted wood familiarly warmer, the clod crumbling enchantingly down in the hands, with its little dry smell of the sun and of hot nettles; each common thing a personality marked by delicious differences.

It is this sensuous cheerfulness in mere living, apparently, that the Buddhist would have us cast away. You remember Rupert Brooke's fine poem "The Great Lover." Western students may be pardoned for wondering whether "Love of life on earth," whatever that life's miseries, ills, and absurdities, is not too precious to be tossed lightly aside.

THE FUN OF WRITING

ON THE way to the station this { warm / chilly } morning

[*Note to Linotype Man: Please kill the inappropriate adjective; we like to be accurate, and this April weather is so inconstant*] we were thinking how little appreciated is the true pleasure of writing.

Writing is an art (or, if you prefer, a trade) never wholly and properly enjoyed except by the intensely indolent. What we mean is this: there are a lot of things in life that are not at all as they should be. But the writer, by magnificent pretence, improves all that. Gardening, for instance. No one enjoys seeing beds thickly decorated with bright flowers and superb vegetables more than we do. But the grubby and tiresome task of groping about with trowels and quicklime and all the other fertilizers is distasteful. Getting sweet peas to climb is a noxious business. Somehow the seedsman always palms off on us a kind of horizontal

sweet pea that runs lowly along the ground and never blossoms at all. But take up the pen, or typewriter, and how quickly everything is rectified. When you set to work to compose a story, how easy it is to have things nice and genteel. Thus:

Out in the bland freshness of the suburban morning, Mr. Frogbones was enjoying his garden. In twin beds under the tall French windows the gardenias and sunflowers were just opening towards the violent orb. Sweet peas and daffodils and vast claret-coloured roses aspired upon a green trellis. "How I love a little nosegay," he said, as he clipped off a couple of dozen of the great cider-tinted chrysanthemums, and bore them indoors to his wife. In the breakfast room a well-trained maid servant was putting the fragrant coffee on the table and the children were drinking their morning milk with neatness and gusto. "Elise," said Mrs. Frogbones to the maid, "you may bring in the sausages, kidneys, bacon, scrambled eggs, anchovy toast, marmalade, grape fruit, porridge, raisin bread, and gooseberry jam. Mr. Frogbones is ready for breakfast."

Now what could be easier, what could be more agreeable, than to write that? And yet not a word of it is true. We know Henry Frogbones well: his garden is contemptible; the maid's coffee is execrable, and she is going to leave at the end of the week anyway; his children roar with anguish when they see a mug of milk, which they detest.

But how pleasant it is to lend a hand to the travailing universe when you are writing.

As Henry Frogbones finished his ample breakfast the large absinthe-coloured limousine rolled with a quiet crunch across the terrace which was pebbled with small blue gravel. He slipped on his new herringbone surtout, lit a fine black cheroot, hitched up one spat which had got twisted, and rolled away to town. Ambrose, the chauffeur, was accustomed to his employer's ways: he drove gently so that Mr. Frogbones could read the morning paper with comfort. After an hour's ride through exquisite scenery [*if the editor pays more than five cents a word, it may be well to describe this scenery*] Mr. Frogbones reached his office, where the morning mail had already been opened and classified by a competent assistant. In the anteroom a number of callers were waiting, held in check by a respectful young man who was explaining to them that no one can possibly disturb Mr. Frogbones until his morning article is written. . . .

As a matter of fact, we don't feel that we can go on with this any further; it is beginning to seem too unlikely. But it only seems unlikely to us, because we know the truth about old Frogbones. The average magazine reader would swallow it without cavil. That is why we say that writing is huge fun, because you can solve all the perplexities and distractions of life as you go along, and really enjoy yourself at the same time, and (most remarkable of all) get paid for it.

A CHRISTMAS SOLILOQUY

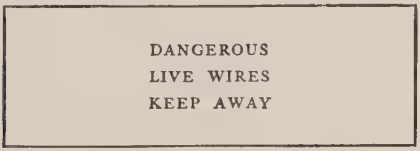
I

IN THE most peaceful spot known to American life—a railroad train—we had several hours of that pleasure which offices are devised to prevent, viz., meditation; or even (if we may dare so high) thought. Our thoughts, or whatever they are that go round inside you when you are sitting passively in a train, were tinged by the approach of Christmas.

There was evidently something in the bright air and pre-Christmas feeling of that December afternoon that even softened the heart of the news butcher, for we noticed as the train hastened along the Connecticut shore his manner became more and more fond. He began, at Grand Central, in a mood of formality, even austerity. "Lots of nice reading matter here, gentlemen," he cried. "Get a nice short story book" (by "book" he meant, of course, magazine) "to kill time for a coupla hours." We thought, perhaps a little sadly, of the irony of begging men to annul Time when they had happily reached almost the only place

in America where it can be enjoyed, examined, taken apart, and looked at. But, perhaps due to a niggardly spirit among his congregation in the smoker, the agent gradually became more fraternal. His manner was almost bedside by the time we had got to New Rochelle. "Choclut pepmints, figs, and lemon drops, fellas!" And at Stamford he was beginning to despair. "Peanuts; they're delicious, boys." We made up our mind, by the way, as to the correct answer to our old question, Where does New England begin? The frontier is at South Norwalk, for there we saw a sign *The New England Cereal Company*. And just about there, also, begin the billboards urging Codfish, surely the authentic image and superscription of New England.

Of course there is a great deal to think about in the signs you see along the track. There is that notice:



which is a good advice socially as well as electrically. But we thought that these warnings were a bit unfair to New England, where there are fewer human Live Wires than there are south of the

Harlem Strait. We remembered a certain club in Philadelphia of which the bitter-minded used to say it was the only organization in the world whose membership was 100 per cent. Live Wires, Regular Fellows, and Go-Getters.

As we went through Greenwich, Riverside, Westport, we admired the blue shore of Long Island lying so placidly across the Sound. And it struck us almost with a sense of shock that there are a great many people to whom Long Island is only a dim, unreal haze on the horizon. Yes, foreign travel is a brisk aperient to the mind. We remembered, as we always do when travelling on the New Haven, Robert Louis Stevenson's delight when he first went that way. In one of his letters he speaks of the succession of beautiful rocky coves that saluted his eye. "Why," he wrote, "have Americans been so unfair to their own country?"

It would be impossible to tell you all the things we thought about: they have already faded. We did not forget our duty, as a travelling mandarin, to be a little magisterial when occasion seemed to require it. In the station at New Haven, for instance, there is a young woman, most remarkably coifed, who presides at the tobacco counter. She seemed of a notably cheerful and lenient disposition, and we ventured a remark upon the weather. She said she wished it would

snow, so that she could have some real fun, by which she meant, we dare say, a little bobsledding with the youths of Yale College. We thought that this showed a dangerous inappreciation of her general opulent good fortune in being young, comely, and attached to a tobacco traffic. We looked at her quite sternly and said, "Young women can always have a good time, no matter what the weather." To our regret, as we hastened on toward the Springfield train, we heard her squeaking with mirth.

But the starting point of our meditations was an attempt to describe and dissect this curious pre-Christmas feeling, which is one of the most subtle and genuine adventures of the whole year. When we try to examine it in its components we see that the whole thing is too delicate and pervasive for analysis. What are its ingredients? we said to ourself. We thought of the little shrill tingling bells of the Salvation Army; we thought of the warm juicy smell of roasting chicken that outgushes from a certain rotisserie in Jamaica, Long Island. We thought of the bright colours and toys in the windows of that glorious main street in Jamaica, which is where we do our Christmas shopping. We thought of all the sparkle, the chill, clear air, the general bustle of the streets, that one associates with the Christmas season; and of the undercurrent of dumb and troubled realization of

human misery and stupidity and frustration that comes to some more clearly now than at any other time. And we thought also of the mockers and the cheerful skeptics, to whom any candid expression of a simple human emotion is cause for nipping laughter. Never mind, we said to ourself, there is at least one time of year when they can all afford to put away their shining paradoxes and their gingerbread cynicisms—like the gilded circus wagons we saw shut up in winter quarters at Bridgeport.

Probably the most sensitive and complex of human sensations is the pre-Christmas feeling: because it is not merely personal but communal; not merely communal but national; not merely national but even international. We know then that for a few weeks a great part of the world is busily thinking of the same things: how it can surprise its friends, how it can encourage the miserable, how it can amuse the harmless. Even the dingiest street has its pathetic badges of colour. It is a great thing to have such a widespread community of sentiment, which, however varying in expression, is identical in essence. One may be amused when he sees the Christmas Annuals published by Australian magazines and finds under the title *A Happy Christmas in New South Wales* a photograph of girls in muslin enjoying themselves by picnicking along shady streams

with canoes and mosquito nettings. That kind of Christmas, we think, would seem very grotesque for us, but our friends the New South Welsh evidently find it exhilarating.

But it is that mysterious and agreeable pre-Christmas feeling which is the best of the whole matter. Christmas Day itself is sometimes almost too feverish a business of picking up blizzards of wrapping paper, convincing the Urchin that his own toys are just as interesting as the Urchiness's, and treading on tiptoe for fear of walking on the clockwork train or the lurking doll. At Christmas time we always think—probably we are the only person who does—of the late admirable William Stubbs, once Bishop of Oxford and Regius Professor of history, the author of those three fat mulberry coloured volumes *The Constitutional History of England*, a work far from easy to read, and which, when we were compelled to study it, seemed of an intolerable dullness. Bishop Stubbs, in the dreadful words of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, "never forgot that he was a clergyman." It is also said that "his lectures never attracted a large audience." But what we are getting at is this, that on Christmas Day, 1873, the excellent Bishop retired from the gambols and gayeties of his five sons and one daughter and wrote the preface to his History. We love to think of him, worthy man, shutting himself up from the

Yuletide riot in roomy old Kettel Hall (now a part of Trinity College, Oxford) and sitting down to write those words, "The History of Institutions cannot be mastered—can scarcely be approached —without an effort." Now that we are somewhat matured, we think that we could probably reread his *Constitutional History* with much profit. In that Christmas Day preface, written while the young Stubbses were (we suppose) filling the house with juvenile clamour, there is one phrase that catches our eye as we take the book down for its annual dusting:

"Constitutional History reads the exploits and characters of men by a different light from that shed by the false glare of arms. The world's heroes are no heroes to it."

II

We shall remember the Christmas of 1921, partly, at any rate, by the wonderful succession of pellucid, frosty, moonlit nights that preceded it. We walked round and round our rustic grange trying to focus just what we wanted to say to our friends as a Christmas greeting. A curious misery was upon our spirit, for we felt that in many ways we had been recreant to the spirit of friendship. When we think, for instance, of the unanswered letters. . . . We have sinned horribly. Yet we wanted to give ourself the selfish pleasure of

saying a word of affection to those who have been kind to us, and to whom, in the foolish but unavoidable hurry of daily affairs, we have been discourteous. (The way to love humanity, we said to ourself, is not to see too much of it.) Moreover, to write a kind of Christmas sermon is, apparently, to put one's self into the loathsome false position of seeming to assume those virtues one praises.

We remember the first clergyman who made an impression upon our childish mind. It was in a country church in a village where we were visiting some kinsmen. This parson was a great bearded fellow, long since gone the way of flesh. He was a bit of a ritualist; his white surplice and embroidered streamers of red and gold impressed us enormously. He came very close to our idea of Divinity itself. We used to sit and hear him booming away and think, vaguely, how wonderful to be as virtuous as that. When the organ throbbed and his vast gray beard rose ecstatically above his white-robed chest we thought that here was Goodness incarnate. Years later we asked what had become of him. We heard that he had lost his job because he drank too much. The more we think about that the tenderer our feeling is towards his memory. Only the sinner has a right to preach.

Thinking about this pre-Christmas feeling, and wanting to say something about it, but not knowing how, we got (as we started to tell you) on a

train. We went, for a few hours, to another city. There we saw, exhilaratingly different, but fundamentally the same, the shining business of life going forward. The people in that city were carrying on their own affairs, were hotfoot upon their own concerns; we saw their eager, absorbed faces, and what struck us was, here are all these people, whose lives are totally sundered from our own, but they have, at heart, the same hopes and aspirations, the same follies, weaknesses, disgusts, and bitternesses as ourself. And the same would be so of a thousand cities, and of a hundred thousand. Then we got into one of those things called a sleeper, which ought to be called a thinker. An ideal cloister for meditation. All down the dark aisle we could hear the innocent snores of our fellows, but we ourself lay wakeful. We felt rather like the mystic Russian peasant who goes to bed in his coffin. We were whirled along through a midnight landscape of transparent white moonlight, and, quite as cheerful as the dead child in Hans Andersen borne through starry space by the angel, we made our peace with everything. We claim no credit for this. We would have slept if we could. There was a huge bump in the middle of the berth, and there was a vile cold draught. We read part of Stephen Crane's magnificent sketch *The Scotch Express*. But those miserable little dim lamps——

And then, strangely enough, there came a sudden realization of the amazing richness and fecundity of life. Every signboard along the railroad track is an illustration of it. Hideous enough, still it is a kind of endless vista into the huge jumble of human affairs. Here is a billboard crying out something about a Spark Plug, or about the Hotel Theresa; or on the side of a little shabby brick tenement a painted legend about Bromo Seltzer. Someone worked to put that advertisement up; someone had sufficient credulity or gambling audacity to pay for it; somewhere children are fed and clothed by that spark plug. Christmas itself suddenly seemed a kind of spark plug that ignites the gases and vapours of selfishness and distrust and explodes them away. Everything seemed extraordinarily gallant and exciting. Take the Hotel Theresa, for instance. We had never heard of it before. It is on 125th Street, we gathered. We would like to wager that all sorts of adventures are lying in wait up there, if we can slip away and go looking for them.

As we were lying in our cool tomb (Carl Sandburg's phrase) in the thinking car, we meditated something like this: Christmas is certainly a time when a reasonable man should overhaul his religion and see if it amounts to anything. Christmas is a time when millions of people are thinking of the same thing. Humanity is so constituted

that you can never get the world to agree about things that have happened; but it is happily at one about something that probably never happened—the Christmas story as told in the Gospels. If millions of simple people believe a thing, that doesn't make it true; but perhaps it makes it better than true: it makes it Poetry, it makes it Beauty. Stephen Graham says, in that moving book *With Russian Pilgrims to Jerusalem* (which certainly ought to be read by every one who is at all interested in religion; it is published by Thomas Nelson & Sons, you may have to get it from London, we don't believe it is in print over here)—Stephen Graham says: "True Religion takes its rise out of Mystery, and not out of Miracle." Religion, which has proved to be one of the greatest dividing and hostilizing forces in the world, is in its essence just the opposite. Surely, in the origin of the word, religion means a binding together, a ligament. Now take the most opposite people you can think of—say Babe Ruth and the Sultan of Turkey (is there still a Sultan?); or say Mr. Balfour and the chap who runs the elevator in this office. No matter how different these may be in training and outlook, there will be some province of human thought and emotion, some small, sensitive spot of the mind, in which they can meet and feel at one. We can imagine them sitting down together for lunch and having a mutually

improving time, each admiring and enjoying the other. Widen the incongruity of the individuals as much as you like: imagine Mr. Joseph Conrad and Dr. Berthold Baer; or Mr. James W. Elliott (the Business Builder) and Mahatma Gandhi—we care not who they are, if they can make their thoughts intelligible to each other they can find that remote but definite point of tangency where any experienced mind can meet and sympathize with any other human mind, discussing the problems of destiny which are common to all. It is this Common Multiple of humanity, this sensitive pulse in the mind, this realization of a universal share in an overburdening mystery too real to be ignored, but too terrific to be defined or blurbed about, that is the province of religion.

And then the devil of it (for there is always a Devil in every sensible religion) is that the best way to be sure there is this possible point of junction is not to attempt to find it. Both Mr. Balfour and the cheerful elevator boy would probably pray heartily to be delivered from sitting down to lunch together. This mysterious mental sensitive spot that we speak of remains sensitive only as long as it remains private and secret. Perhaps religion can be defined as a sense of human fellowship that is best preserved by not being too companionable.

We were thinking, too, how extremely modern

and contemporary the Christmas story seems. It is appropriate that the final instalment of the Income Tax falls just before Christmas. The same thing happened 1921 years ago. "There went out a decree that all the world should be taxed," says Luke. That was why Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem—to pay their tax. And we can imagine that the Bethlehem *Evening Star*, if there had been newspapers at that time, would have had a column of social notes just similar in spirit to those of our own press to-day. The arrival of Joseph and Mary would not have been noticed. We might have read:

Mr. and Mrs. Pharisee of "White Sepulchre," Galilee, are spending the winter at the Tiberius Hotel.

The Hon. Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judæa, is enjoying a week-end visit with Tetrarch and Mrs. Herod at the tetrarchal mansion.

Mr. and Mrs. Philip Herod are travelling in Syria for the winter. Mrs. Herod was before her marriage Miss Herodias, socially prominent.

Prof. Melchior, Prof. Balthazar, and Prof. Gaspar arrived last night from the West. They are said to be in town for some astronomical investigations. The professors had great trouble in securing hotel accommodations, the city being so crowded.

Rev. Caiaphas, one of the most respected High Priests in this diocese, has an apartment for the winter at Philactery Court.

The train pursued its steady way through the moonlight, and the silvered loveliness of earth and trees made us think generously of our own country. We are still foolish enough to love this America of ours with a dumb queer love. We still believe that in spite of Senates and Live Wires, in spite of the antics of some of the half-educated and well-meaning men who "govern" us, this country has a unique contribution to make to the world in future years. There should be international Christmas cards: there should be some way of one nation surprising another with a friendly message on the Morning of Mornings. We believe (perhaps we are not impartial) that the English-speaking race, by its contributions to human liberty, has a right to a leading place in the world's affairs; but if it gives way to its characteristic vice of arrogance, we weary of it. We think of the feminine brilliance, charm, and emotional volatility of France; of the beautiful sensibility and self-control of Japan; of the melancholy idealism of Russia; of the sober industry of Germany. Have we, then, nothing to learn from these? Printers' ink is scattered about these days with such profusion that it becomes almost meaningless. Sitting in the subway, and raising our eye plaintively from a newspaper to an advertising card, we have wondered which was the greater menace, Pyorrhea or Japan? Both were said to be menaces. It is our

own conviction that nothing can be a menace to America but itself.

This seems a dismal kind of Christmas homily, but we enjoyed ourself immensely while we were meditating it in our lower berth. Very likely if it had been an upper berth the result would have been different. In any case, we take the liberty of wishing our friends—who are, by this time, too indurated to feel surprise or chagrin at anything we may say—a Merry Christmas. We wish for them a cheerful and laborious New Year, with good books to read, and both the time and the inclination to think. We even wish for them occasional eccentric seizures, such as we feel at the present; when we have a dim suspicion that behind the noble and never sufficiently praised comedy of life there lies some simple satisfying answer to many gropings. A simple thing, but too terrible and far-reaching ever to be wholly put into practice by puzzled and compromising mankind. We mean, of course, the teachings of Christ. Consider the German generals and military men, who lost everything. But the German toymakers conquered the world.

A SEA SHELL IN NORMANDY

YOU first see Mont St. Michel from the toy railway train at St. Jean-le-Thomas. You know then that what you have always heard was true. After lunch at Genêts you drive across the sands at low tide, in a cart pulled by two horses. On a gray afternoon, with opal storm clouds coiling in the west, the wide floor of the bay lies wet and bare, shining all silver and fish-belly colours. The rock of Tombelaine sprawls like a drowsy mastiff on guard. You feel that if you stroked the warm granite chine he would rise, stretching, and fill the empty day with a yawn of thunder. In all that clean vacancy, framed in the blue scabbard of Normandy and Brittany, the holy boulder rises, a pinnacle of stone jewellery. The great ramps are rusted with tawny lichen. Tiny gardens niched among the steep zigzags are bright with flowers. With the genuine thrill and tingle of the pilgrim you climb, cricking your neck at the noble sheer of those walls and struts that lean upward and inward to carry the needle of the spire. Pinnacles rally and burn aloft like darts of flame. You can almost feel the whole roundness

of earth poise and spin, socketed upon this stony boss of peace. You think of the Woolworth Building. How nice if that too were sown with clumps of pink and yellow blossom and had blankets of green ivy over its giraffe rump.

Your mind travels back to the tough and pious men who carried their stones here and built their little Eden of escape: an Eden so shrewdly scarped that apparently even the fifteenth century Old Bills of England cursed and withdrew. You imagine the pilgrims of the Middle Ages plodding the sands from Avranches—occasionally losing one or two of the party in a quicksand—and their heavenly exult as they ached at last up the steps of the "Grand Degree" and saw through the dark archway that wide hearth shouting with flame. Yet perhaps mere pilgrims were not allowed to draw near the giant fireplaces of St. Michel? That ruddy warmth that gilded the groins of the pillars, was it reserved for the abbot and the upper clergy? (You saw, I hope, those great columns in the crypt, where the veins of stone rise to their task as smoothly, as alive with lifting strength, as the cords of a horse's haunch.)—One wonders a good deal about the mediæval pilgrim. Was he welcomed and warmed and refreshed, or was he pillaged? Probably the souvenir vendors lay alert for him, as they do to-day. And was there a mediæval Veuve Poulard, down by the

barbican, with an omelet waiting hot in the pan, a bottle of wine cold in the cellar? At any rate, many a whole ox must have crackled in those vast hooded chimneys of the abbey; and the warrior abbot could throw his bones out of the window on the *goddams*, hustling to get their bombards back to Tombelaine before they were caught by the tide.

So you people this divine old miracle of stonework, just as you have dreamed beforehand of a still living shrine with candles by the altar, and small shrill choir-boys in scarlet, the flutter of surplice and *soutane*, and dark bells calling across the sandy estuary. Then, as you are taken through in squads by a *gardien*, you realize that this noble sanctuary is dead. It is no longer a church, but a monument, under the care of the Ministry of Fine Arts. The abbey is only a shell: there is not even a chance to pray. The State, with skilful devotion, has saved and repaired the hull; but it is only a hull. There if anywhere, lifted above the quicksands (how often the old abbots must have improved this moral in their discourses), one would be eager to whisper some small silly petition in honour of man's magnificent hopes. But it is not expected. The old fonts are dry, the altars naked, the tall aisles bare as a February forest. The casket of stone filigree is empty. The imprint of the spirit is there, just as those leagues of sand are ripple-patterned by this morning's ebb. But

it is only a print, a fossil. The sea has gone out. Even the tiniest parish church, with its Tariff of Marriages (a First-class Marriage 50 francs, a Second-class Marriage 30 francs, a Third-class 20 francs) is in some sense more inwardly alive. The Mount is not even an island any more: they've built a *digue* that brings autobuses and toy trains from Pontorson. It is a shrine, a miracle, a testimonial of man's horror of the world and his fellows; but its beauty is the beauty of death, purified, serene, at rest.

You drive away across the luminous mirrors of wet beach, you see that exquisite profile shift and alter until it is a scissored peak on sky. You may walk the ebb sands of the world for ever and not find so lovely a shell. But it is only a shell, and in its whorls and passages a faintest echo of the sea.

Must it always be so, one thinks, lighting up the pipe of penitential Scaferlati? Perhaps there is always something a little dead (I don't defend this figure of speech, but I like it) about the old masterpieces? Glorious and terrible, don't they say to us that we are not to be dismayed by their beauty but to recreate our own masterpieces for ourselves? The other day I read Alfred de Musset's gorgeous little fable *Histoire d'un Merle Blanc:* one of those fiery trifles in which the French genius seems at its most native: under the guise of tender and naïf simplicity such a clear

ember of satire. My first thought was that de Musset's adorable little dagger in the heart should have made (if it had been heeded) so many later books unnecessary. So far as it bears on literary manners it clicks the latch to-day as neatly as it did seventy or eighty years ago, and might have spared us many editorials in the newspapers. I laid it down with the despairing happiness that any student feels on reaching the end of a perfect thing: for I could imagine how happy was the Infant of His Century when he finished it. He had reached one of those rare and perfect moments the artist lives for. He had done it, and knew it was good.

Yet it all had to be done again—and has been. And I remembered, Mont St. Michel reinforcing it, that these things must always be done over and over; that there is no durable pause even in the most perfect pinnacles that overlook the sea. Here and there a pilgrim will be bogged in a quicksand, or get caught by the tide. But some will reach, for a one night's reverence, the shrine where the dragon of despair grinds under Michael's heel. They chant their private prayers and penances, they get out the illuminated manuscripts, they sing their sacreds, they make their mirth. They roast an ox in the fireplace, and throw the bones through the window where the critics are haling their heavy bombards through the sand.

SLOW GIN

SANTA CLAUS came back that year even more tired and discouraged than usual. Mrs. Claus had a good fire going in the library, his fur slippers warm on the hearth, but he sat down with a grunt, too dispirited even to pull off his big boots. But Mrs. Claus, who knows very well how porcupiny the philanthropists and professional genials often are when they get home, was too wise to seem to notice his depression. She drew the curtains closer to shut out the sparkling polar darkness.

"Have you noticed how long the nights are getting?" she said. "You'll be glad to get back among your books."

Santa Claus has quite a large library, his shelves are lined with those fine rag-paper and morocco-bound *de luxe* sets of Oscar Wilde and Ridpath and Great French Courtesans, numbered (like the hairs of your head) by the Biblioshark Sodality. These are the things that Santa gets stuck with, because no one wants them for Christmas and he has to bring them home with him. Mrs.

Claus, however, who doesn't know a 12mo. from an Eskimo, believes them very valuable.

But the old fellow sat staring at the fire in a serene despair, more like Santayana than Santa Claus.

"Well, did you have a good trip?" she said. "How was New York?" (Mrs. Claus is always curious to know about New York. She imagines it as a place of prodigious thrilling gayety, and Santa has told her about the shop windows and the electric signs, which really are almost as fine as the Aurora Borealis.)

He shook his head pensively.

"The competition's getting too intense," he said. "The bootlegger is the real Santa nowadays in New York. My clients all want the little miracle of liquid flame that evens man with God. I caught a terrible cold going out in a launch to get enough whiskey to satisfy my customers. A queer thing happened to me.

"Coming back in the motor boat I fell into conversation with one of the bootleggers. You'd be surprised how philosophic some of those fellows are. Well, somehow or other we got talking about moving pictures, and this chap was saying that the most beautiful thing in the world is the slowed film. He owns a movie theatre somewhere in Brooklyn, but he says he can't afford to show the kind of pictures that he likes best himself be-

cause all the crowd wants is the 'Flaming Youth' sort of thing. Well, I agreed with him about the slowed pictures. I said how wonderful it would be if we could for a few hours retard life itself just like that, to have a good look at the astonishing elements of loveliness that lurk in every movement. Curves, you know. See things in that leisurely perspective that God must have. Why even a taxi spinning round a corner would float like a leaf eddying on warm October air. But I guess I can't quite explain to you how I felt about it. I was tired, buzzing about getting things fixed up for Christmas.

"He looked at me rather queerly. 'It can't be done,' he said. 'God wouldn't like it. It's *His* prerogative to see things slowly. But if you can't slow down life, you can speed up the eye, which gives, relatively, the same effect.'

"I asked him what he meant.

"'Wood alcohol,' he said, 'has a queer effect on the optic nerve.' Well, I didn't like his talking like that, just after he had guaranteed the quality of the stuff I had got from him for my customers. But, to make it short, he gave me a little bottle, for myself, of what he called (I believe) Slow Gin. He said that for a brief time, and with no harmful effect (physically, anyhow) it would accelerate my eyes so that life would look like a slowed film."

He paused. Mrs. C., who knows nothing about movies, bootleggers, New York—indeed, nothing at all of life except Ridpath and the Court Memoirs—was a bit puzzled. But she could see that he wanted to talk, so she asked a question just to help him along.

"Yes," he said, "it did. I suppose you know—or maybe, happily, you don't—what a wearisome muscular exertion is involved in trying to think about abstract matters. You can feel an actual thrilling and tensile alertness in the obscure muscles of the cortex. Something the way an electric wire might feel when the light is turned on. Well, when I had taken this gin all that feeling was abolished. Thought became perfectly unaware of itself. I saw the movement of civilization slowed down to its component gestures. Wonderful, oh wonderful! I think I know now why philosophers and poets go mad. That's the way they see things. Do you remember that line of Stevenson's, '*And methought that beauty and terror are only one, not two*'?

"But imagine it," he went on. "I saw the passion, the momentum of New York in a grave sluggish rhythm, solemn as a great elegiac ritual. I could see significance in all the strange wonders that ordinarily flash past us in a twinkling. Expressions of loveliness and mirth and embarrassment and anger, that flit over faces and are gone,

these I saw posed and held long enough to be studied and admired. I saw Time, the sculptor, in the amazing process of carving Life. I saw the reporter over the swift chattering keys of his typewriter. I could see his hand poise and float above the keyboard, softly balanced as the wing of a gull. You'd have thought he was writing the most exquisite philosophy in the world. I could imagine I saw the quick thoughts of men slowly coiling and rising like heavy smoke. I saw the crowd of commuters when the train gate opens at the Long Island Station in the evening. Instead of that multitudinous pour down the stairway, I could see the mass gently lip over the top step and descend as softly gradual as cold molasses. I could see the actual face and contour of clownish ecstasies and solitary despairs. I saw two people saying good-bye. Did you ever see that, as it really is?

"The bootlegger was right. It won't do. It won't do to look upon the itemized flow of life. You become aware of the rhythm of it, and it terrorizes you. Everything becomes beauty, and there's nothing more appalling than that. It heats the imagination till it splits like a roasting chestnut. Men are quite right in moving as fast as possible. You've got to go some to get away from yourself. But how lovely they are when they're unaware of themselves! I saw a girl mailing a

letter, at that bronze box in the Telephone and Telegraph Building—I always have to attend to that letter box, so many people use it for mailing Christmas cards. You'd have said that she wasn't thinking of anything in particular, but no work of art ever dreamed could be more lovely than the slow stretch of her body as she hovered up on tiptoe to reach the slit. She was so perfect that I could tell she knew she was doomed. You know, that was it. I saw the solemnity that underlies every movement. I saw an audience beginning to laugh at a musical comedy joke. My sensitized eye caught the gradual coming and mounting and breaking of that poor guffaw, like a big wave crumbling in from sea. Phew, that was terrible! Never again. You know how it is in a sleigh. You've got to go fast over thin ice. Well, that's life itself. Thin ice. When you begin to monkey with the Time-sense you turn things either into a hasty farce or else into a Greek frieze."

"I hope you didn't catch a chill," said Mrs. Claus. "I'm going to mix you something hot."

She bustled up, dropped her knitting and creakingly leaned down to retrieve it. Santa watched her with humorous impatient affection. His optic nerves still retained a faint aftermath of the drug, and he was able, as she hastened anxiously toward the pantry, to slow down the image of her moving figure, and see it in ponder-

ously retarded tempo. He chuckled. But he remembered the enormous relief with which he had felt his hallucination begin to wear off. Gradually, gradually, he had seen the panorama resume its wonted swiftness, abdicate that lovely swooning dignity, resume its charming absurd hilarities and grotesqueness.

"No," he repeated to himself, "it won't do. Life has got to synchronize itself with the customary adjustment of the mind. And the mind mustn't climb out of the stream and sit on the bank to watch consciousness go by. You mustn't try to split up Time into pieces for all you find is little nasty bits of eternity. Men are determined that life should be amusing, and to be that it's *got* to move fast."

He still thought hungrily of that miracle he had seen: the grave airy dancing of creation, treading softly its dark measure to unheard, undreamed music. He saw again the slow lineament of desire, the leisurely miracle of women's grace, the insane gaiety on frolic faces, the sorry grin of cruelty, the tenderness that returns with dusk.

Mrs. Claus came with a steaming jug.

"Well," she said cheerily, "I'm glad you had such an interesting time. And what did you decide to give them this year?"

"I wondered a good deal," he said. "I wondered whether to give them another Conrad to teach

them pity, or another Anatole France to show them how to mock themselves. But what I did give them was the greatest of all gifts."

He paused and drank down a glassful of hot toddy with a shudder of content.

"I gave them the privilege, for just one day, of not thinking at all."

BAEDEKER FIBBED

I RESOLVED to renew at Cherbourg the marvels of Egypt," says the inscription on the statue of Napoleon, where the plump little emperor sits on a horse whose antic would probably have unseated him in real life. He does not specifically say which of Egypt's portents he proposed to revive; though by his gesture we gather that he means the vast stone breakwater on which shines the star of Baedeker, guiding pilgrims from afar. Myself, I was inclined to believe that a certain Swiss concierge (himself a true Bonaparte in physique) was a reincarnation of the asp. But nowadays, when we are more wonted to great engineering projects, the real astonishment of Cherbourg is the endless caravan of Americans who flit feverishly through the town without halting to draw breath. The Swiss concierge, in his field-marshal's uniform, harries them a little, inflicts a few cicatrices on the right-hand trouser; but most of them escape.

In the summer season the big liners come in from New York two or three a day. Every few

hours you see the long strings of railway cars marked ÉTAT lining up along the quay to take the passengers to Paris. Our fellow countrymen come shuffling down the steep gang plank from the tender—perhaps the tender *Nomadic*, or the *Traffic*, or the *Lotharingia*, or the *Welcome*—names so much less imaginative than the *Sir Richard Grenville* at Plymouth. After a brief frenzy in that little blue-and-white-striped shed of the *douane* where the whiskered, cloaked, and sworded *apéritif* officials look so much fiercer than they really are, they climb into the train. At once they fill the restaurant cars and order wine; or you see them sitting patiently in the first-class carriages watching the dusty quay and throwing their money to the ragged urchins who frequent the *gare maritime*. The lovely little town that lies across the basin is hidden from them by the shed. And after all, hasn't Baedeker told them that Cherbourg is "comparatively uninteresting"? So, unless the ship happens to arrive in the evening, they all buzz straight on to Paris. If they land late they go to the Hôtel du Casino, one of those amusing nodes in the great network of travel where sooner or later you inevitably encounter someone you know. There M. Minden, the courteous manager, will greet them with his dark, melancholy, and secretly humorous gaze; and eventually teach them that the first syllable

of the town's name is not without significance Sometimes, coming downstairs toward nine or ten in the evening, you'll find the quiet little lobby suddenly buzzing with a new lot. The *Berengaria* is in, or the *Olympic*, or the *President Harding*. You'll see them sitting in the bar-parlour having a snack before retiring, or looking hopefully for a new copy of the New York *Tribune*. The only French client I ever saw at the Casino was a luckless lady just in from the States who had been abroad so long she had forgotten how to order wine. She came into the bar breathing exultation at her escape from the *régime sec*. Then, as the expectant *garçon* waited for some order expressing the soul and talent of a connoisseuse, her face drooped. She couldn't think of anything . . . and ordered a grenadine—which creates in a French bartender about the same enthusiasm as asking a Liggett soda-twister for a beaker of lukewarm goat's milk.

But by the time you come down to breakfast you'll find that the overnight batch of Americans has already sped onward. Cherbourg has resigned itself to this state of affairs: so much so that if you tell them you intend to stay there awhile they'll hardly believe you, and unless you watch your baggage piece by piece they shove it on the Paris train anyhow. (*Crede experto.*) Those Americans who are still in the hotel when you enter the

dining room are perhaps making themselves obnoxious to the head waiter because there aren't any hot breads. As I was sitting happily with my *café complet* I could hear one elderly gentleman crying bitterly, "Hot rolls, hot rolls. I want 'em red hot!" Why do our friends go abroad at all if they expect everything to be exactly as at home? It is these creatures who account for that deeply submerged glitter in the manager's eye, and make travel so much more expensive for the rest of us. At any rate, Cherbourg is not such a bad place to study one's fellow citizens, for you see them at a moment of crisis when they are very keenly conscious of their nationality. With an almost defiant air they insist on talking English to the employees as though to prove and ram home the fact that there really is such a language.

I shall never forget the thrill and charm of that late arrival. It was one of those long June twilights when the *Lancastria* dropped anchor inside Napoleon's Egyptian *digue*. On the tender, anxiously attempting to gather into one corner his various baggages, paterfamilias was naturally too troubled to have a chance to enjoy the view of the harbour that lay so lilac in the evening light; though there was, subconsciously, as one's eye noticed that long solid line of stone houses which fronts the sea, the odd realization that foreign countries are real after all, which quaintly surprises one

anew at every visit. By the time we had got through the customs, rescuing all our pieces (save one, containing of course the baby's most urgent affairs) from being "expedited" to Paris, it was close on eleven o'clock. The Cherbourg *douaniers* and porters work like demons at that time of night, "expediting" one to Paris, for not unnaturally they are anxious to get home and to bed. And when the boat train, with a wild scream, had left, and there was a chance for the rest of us to be chalk-marked, all hotel omnibuses had gone for the night. Nothing remained but a baggage *camion*, on the front seat of which, together with the chauffeur, the Swiss Napoleon, the nurse, and the four children, Titania and I rode triumphantly round the corner to the Casino. Shortly afterward, piloted by a chambermaid, we again found ourselves in open air, under stars, crossing a gravelly courtyard. Quite a surprisingly long journey it seemed. Up a winding stair, in a distant annex, we found some very clean little rooms with a jovial aroma of chlorides and windows opening above the beach. With magical rapidity a tray of hot chocolate and bread and butter was "made mount" from the kitchen, and it fell to me to administer these delights to two small damsels (aged five-and-a-half and three-and-a-half) who had been hastily thrust into one large bed. They gargled down some of the chocolate,

inquired eagerly, "Is this France?" and fell into nescience. So I finished the chocolate and the crackly bread with plenty of curly whorls of pale unsalted butter. At about the same time, in the dining room downstairs, one of our fellow passengers was saying, "Some of that doughy French bread? No, thank you!"

I am always for arrivals late at night. You can't see your surroundings, and the next day you wake into a new world. From my bedroom window eight hours later I looked out upon the sunny courtyard of the hotel and an ancient in a blue apron cutting grass with a scythe.

The Casino—where we stayed two weeks—is perhaps a little symbol of the whole matter. There is one wing of the establishment which is the hotel proper, devoted mostly to the one-night ravishment of Americans. But then you pass through a little door into the casino itself and are in France. A terrace with blue tables fronts the harbour and the pebble beach; behind this is a dance hall where a very gay and violent little orchestra gives an *apéritif-concert* every afternoon. The tiny Citroëns and other queer boat-shaped miniature automobiles keep driving through the courtyard, and the *bons bourgeois* of Cherbourg drop in afternoons and evenings for dancing and *petits chevaux* and even (twice a week) a Paramount film shown on a very minute screen. The

operator was very proud of his Paramount films, and assured me that America had produced some very great film artists, such as "Bebe Danyelss" and "Guillaume Ar." It took me an appreciable ponder before recognizing the name of the latter. At the *apéritif-concerts*, where you sit with your Raphael-citron or your café-cognac watching the dancing, you enjoy the cheerful French habit of taking the whole family along for an afternoon sip—grandmother, babies, and the dog. It would be nice to believe that the young men are all poets, for those broad-brimmed black hats and something odd about the shape of their trousers certainly suggest it. But all this gay and harmless life of the casino goes on quite apart from the hotel which the tourists see. It is always like that: there is a little door which divides the France that is exposed for the traveller from the France that goes placably about its own concerns.

But of course the real life of the town is across the revolving bridge, past the upper basin where the Polish square-rigged corvette *Lwow* is lying, past the docks where the English tramp steamers are taking daily the endless stream of crates of new potatoes. Across the bridge you find the taxicabs drawn up, a compact little squadron, and among them, if you are fortunate, perhaps you'll find Lucien Le Cornu, kindest of guides to the enchanting old towns near Cherbourg. His only sorrow in

life is that a hundred and fifty Americans have gone touring in his car and taken photos of him but have never sent him a print. This has now been rectified. If you don't find Le Cornu at his station at the bridge-end, the thing to do is to go to the Café Continental near by where they'll give him a *coup de téléphone*. M. Le Cornu was a godsend to us; he is friendly, reasonable, a keen enthusiast for the old architectures of Normandy, and his French has a special clarity and penetration into the unaccustomed transatlantic ear. He has a delightful humour too. Our first week or so at the Casino, we, with four urchins, were somewhat the oddity of the establishment; but then arrived a very wealthy New Yorker with six children, several maids, five cases of Walker-Gordon milk, and occupied most of the ground floor of the hotel. The next morning, before he departed for the château he had rented at Dinard, I saw him musing pensively among his mountains of impediment which filled the lobby. This is where M. Le Cornu enters the anecdote, for a fleet of seven limousines was deployed in the courtyard to transport the party. Four of these were loaded with the baggage, and of this freight squadron Le Cornu was commodore. While the passenger detachment sped to Granville for lunch, Le Cornu halted his heavy quartet at Lessay for a brief *déjeuner*. The four thirsty chauffeurs sat down at

the scrubbed wooden tables of the little Hôtel Félix; the natives crowded round to inquire the meaning of these four vehicles packed inside and out with trunks, baby carriages, golf bags, and what not. It must have looked ominously like another flight of King Louis Philippe; and indeed on that very day President Millerand was vacating the Élysée. What is it, what is it? cried the troubled Normans; for the French are always subconsciously prepared for some sort of *crise* or *coup*. Lucien took a long pull at his cider. "Well," he replied gravely, "you've heard of the American kings—the cattle kings, copper kings, petrol kings? This is *le roi des bagages*."

Excellent Lucien! I still seem to hear the clear yelp of his rubber-bulb horn as he twirls through those Norman villages, taking us to Barfleur, or Valognes loved by Barbey d'Aurevilly, to Greville where Millet was born, or past de Tocqueville's château near Cherbourg, which surely ought to be a place of pilgrimage for Americans; or to Bricquebec, whose Trappist cheese you'll do well to sample, and to the Nez de Jobourg, that fine rocky beak blown by the Atlantic wind. Well named Le Cornu: you know the canorous double note of those French motor horns, the exhale and the in.

But we were crossing the bridge and entering the town itself. Perhaps it would tempt the ladies

to linger awhile in Cherbourg if I confided, on Titania's authority, that they'll find in the Rue du Bassin one of the world's best coiffeurs; and not to make it too easy I'll only give the translation of his name, Mr. Burningfire. More frequented by me was the little photograph shop across the way, where I see good Mme. Vaslot's face of almost agonized intensity as she listens wildly to my French, wondering what unforgivable syntax is coming next. Then, with a sudden radiation of light she grasps my intention. I had seen, in her window, a printed placard remarking how many *situations presque inénarrables* can be preserved with a camera. "*Mais, madame,*" I tell her, "*toute la vie, c'est une situation presque inénarrable.*" She applauds. This leads us on to discuss a small dog that is in the shop, who has had his tail cut off flush with his rump. He is trying, in spite of this—can we say handicap?—to express his pleasure in the good society where he finds himself. I attempt to carry on my argument. "*Voici, madame, encore une autre situation presque inénarrable. C'est bien cruel de couper comme ça, le petit chien se trouve embarrassé parce que la queue c'est l'organe des émotions chez les chiens, son organe de sensibilité.*" With a rush of syllables she and M. Vaslot approve this doctrine, and hasten to explain that it is not their animal but a neighbour's. Their pretty young daughter.

embroidering behind the *caisse*, is politely trying to smother her grins.

After a round of the bookstores—where perhaps you may be disconcerted to find *Tarzan des Singes* in the window, flanked by *Rip*, *l'Homme Qui Dormit Vingt Ans*, and where you buy your Petit Larousse, that heavy but indispensable little travelling university—it may well be that you stop in at the American Express office to say hullo to the agent, Mr. White, and change some money. If you happen to be interested in books and plays, Mr. White is just the man to gossip with, for he used to be chauffeur to Mrs. Deland and also to Winthrop Ames. Mr. Ames used to have him read play MSS. now and then, and I was tempted to get his opinion on a script of my own that was in my trunk; but he was giving me nineteen and a half francs to the dollar, and I didn't want to do anything to lower the rate. Or perhaps Titania lures you into the Grands Magasins L. Ratti (M. Ratti is the Wanamaker of Cherbourg) to buy a waist for the Urchin. Here the hilarity is extreme when it is discovered that French urchins wear a kind of webbed corset with which their smallclothes are kept aloft; there was great grievance in the Urchin's bosom when he was made acquainted with this garment. I have promised it shall be quietly dropped overboard before we lift Sandy Hook again. A little quiet

study of the wine merchants' windows provides good suggestions of new vintages to ask for. Vin d'Anjou, for instance, which costs two francs twenty-five per bottle in the town, though it rises to five or seven at the hotel. (At hotels where they cater to Americans it is hard to get them to serve you *vin ordinaire*. The little man with the green apron comes for your order, and unless you are very stiff with him he'll send you something with a label on it.)

To be perfectly fair all round, Titania and I went one evening to a meeting, presided over by the Mayor, held by the *Ligue Nationale contre l'Alcoolisme*, followed by an uproariously bad movie, "The Double Life of Dr. Moraud." But the film kept breaking and finally they quit with it unfinished, just at the point where the luckless Dr. Moraud, eminent surgeon and secret helot of *eau de vie*, is about to trepan the fractured skull of his son's fiancée; but on the way to the hospital, while his motor was having a *pneu* changed, he has dodged into a groggery to indulge himself. He totters to the operating table with palsied hand . . . here the celluloid snapped again, and the Mayor got up and said that the operator had had such trouble with the machine that they would have to call it off. Without any of the ironical booing we should have expected, the large audience rose calmly and sifted out. The French

take their movies very tranquilly and, odd as it may seem, on a warm clear summer evening they prefer sitting outdoors and watching the sunset, fishing along the docks, or sipping the Raphael-citron that is the favourite bourgeois *apéritif*.

In fact, the "light sane joy of life," as Kipling said in his famous poem, is very evident. It seems based on a certain calm acceptance of necessary facts of living, a simple and hardy jocularity in plain pleasures that is sedative to those who have too long accustomed themselves to the Broadway temperament. The stone hamlets of the Cotentin, original home of so many of our race, are now as gray and lichened as Jobourg's Nose itself. There is something very pitiful about those rude thatched dwellings taking shelter under the pent of a gorse-gemmed hill. Life is reduced almost to its animal rudiments; the ruddy old women jogging back from Cherbourg market in their high-wheeled carts have an almost speechless tranquillity, lulled into a warm doze of the wits by the lyric humming of thin little telephone wires in the breeze. The dusty byways are patterned with the nailprints of their frugally bossed footgear; on the very soil one reads the mark of their pious and necessary thrift. Larks, little mounting flutters of song, keep earnestly pushing up the sky for fear it will tumble. By the village churches are the washing

pools, always with a cross or sacred effigy to bless the wholesome work; the women kneel to paddle the linen just as they would kneel to pray, and hardly know one from the other; nor does it greatly matter. Surely the great clerics need not be alarmed at the government's withdrawing its embassy from the Vatican: the church's share in French life is not pillared upon embassies. And if they all wear black when they approach the church, what race has more reason to? See the little war monument at Barfleur, where the names of seven Renoufs of one family are written on the stone. It makes one wamble a bit to think of the million villages of Europe, all those frugal people going about their hard and harmless concerns, cutting their hay and arranging their local fêtes with the children riding on a *petit manège* (or merry-go-round) turned by hand, and meanwhile the pride and stupidity and harassment of politicians can slide the whole thing toward fiendish catastrophe. Then one can understand better the grimness of the Communist placards, pasted on the stone walls of country barns, calling on the *ouvrier* and *paysan* to throw out their bourgeois deputies, and hallooing generals in the Chamber as "*assassins.*"

We spent one long sunny and windy afternoon at the Pentecost horse races, to which all Cherbourg turns out, from the neighbourhood aristocrats with silk hats and field glasses to the old

gray-eyed peasant women in their lace-and-linen coifs, and hundreds of the coloured Senegalese troops in their scarlet bellhop caps. These amiable savages are so absurdly like the American elevator boy that it seems grotesque to hear them jabbering French. I suppose they make in a year about what a New York hat-checker pockets on a Saturday night;—but I don't know that they're less happy. One consoling feature of human life is that wherever you go you find the people quite innocently certain that to be where they are and to do what they are doing is the normal and sensible thing.

But as agreeably revealing evidence of the French enjoyment of simple pleasures I clipped a little piece from the Cherbourg paper, describing how *La Musique* of Hainneville, a sort of singing society in the suburbs, made its first picnic of the season. I please myself by translating with faithful literalness:

> At 1 hour 30 the musicians, assembled on the Place de la Mairie, announced by the execution of a morsel the approaching departure for Urville; then, in the name of all the members of *La Musique*, a magnificent object of art was offered to the leader, M. Henri Avoine, on the occasion of this first expedition. Very much touched by this gesture of sympathy, M. Avoine renewed his promise to do all his possible to develop and lead to worthiness the work undertaken.

At the issue of this little manifestation, *La Musique* put itself on the road, followed by about 120 persons, whose number continued to augment all the length of the traject, attaining approximately 450 near Querqueville, and that in spite of the storm, menacing more and more.

All went well as far as Urville, where the excursionists arrived toward 4 hours.

Unfortunately the storm, which burst out almost at once, hindered all the world from taking its diversions, whether on the beach or in the various quarters of the coquettish little town of Urville, and one had to content himself, after the crust-breaking, by making a ball in the interior of the spacious restaurant Renard, when it might otherwise have taken place in the open air, in the superb shrubbery of this establishment.

The return effectuated itself in some excellent conditions and without the least incident, the rain having completely ceased to fall and the gaiety not having ceased to prevail during the whole traject. Toward 8 hours 30 *La Musique* reëntered triumphantly into Hainneville, having been acclaimed everywhere on its course, going and coming.

Wherever you wander, through the astoundingly ancient crooked lanes of the town, sometimes among smells that explain the French passion for perfumery, you find yourself led back toward the harbour. To me, since childhood, docks and railway sidings have always been the most fascinating places to prowl; at Cherbourg you have them

both in one. Along the *digue* beyond the *gare maritime* one can study the constant movement of the harbour: pilot boats coming in and out, the fishing fleet with amber sails, and also see the restaurant cars cleaning and getting ready to cater to more Americans. Apparently the stewardesses of those cars live in them and cook their own meals, for you'll see them, bare-legged, early in the morning, washing down the woodwork, a little waver of smoke coming from the kitchen stovepipe. If it's one of those bright mornings of early June, as blue as an alcohol flame, the railway men who are off duty will be down on the shingle, paddling. Frenchmen always seem to be able to take a few hours off during the day to go wading. Very likely they are picking up kindling; for when the Urchin and I wanted a billet of wood to make a toy boat, we scoured the beach and environs for many furlongs without finding a single scrap. Finally we had to go to the boatyard and beg a small piece left over from the fishing smack *Bienheureuse Thérèse* which they were building. But if you don't find any bits of wood lying idle on a French beach, neither do you find any housekeeping refuse. Some of our American seaside towns might well be named Cannes.

Cherbourg is justly proud of her harbour and proud of her shipyards. When the *Mauretania* was overhauled there lately, on account of a strike in

the English yards, there was great exultation in the town. Then, on her first succeeding voyage, a propeller dropped off. This elicited an editorial in the Cherbourg *Eclair*, pointing out that no work had been done on the propellers while the *Mauretania* was in the *chantiers* of Cherbourg. In fact, said the editor, perhaps it was exactly the fact that our Cherbourg workmen *hadn't* overhauled the *hélices* that caused one of them to falter under the excessive strain of the hitherto-unheard-of celerity at which the vast vessel was marching after the invigorating repairs made to the machine by our expert mechanicians. Local pride, happily, is the same all the world round.

Titania would never quite agree with me as to the fun of patrolling the railway sidings, reading the *étiquettes* on the freight cars. But that is how I learn my French, such as it is. The study of posters, advertisements, municipal notices, all sorts of random *affiches*, I find more useful than a phrase book. I didn't begin to get the hang of the subjunctive until I found it on the label of my matchbox. "*Ne jetez jamais vos allumettes avant qu'elles* soient *entièrement éteintes*." And sometimes the bills-of-lading pasted on the sides of freight cars will tell you more truth about what's going on than the daily paper. While some of the journals were expressing alarm that the first thing M. Herriot and his "bolshevik" government

would do would be to evacuate the Ruhr, I found freight cars loaded with gun carriages marked for *l'Armée sur Rhin*. For the most part, though, I found those quaint little wagons (with their famous legend *Hommes* 40, *Chevaux* 8) loaded with matters more to my pacific taste: potatoes and carrots from the Farmers' Syndicate of Barfleur, or officers' horses from Saint Lô coming to take part in the races.

Meditation along these docksides gave me excellent opportunity to fortify my verbal resources. Amply provided with nouns of all sorts, my methods of putting them together in trains of speech are as primitive as the French way of shunting freight cars with an elderly horse. It was on the sidings of Cherbourg that I invented my trick to avoid the embarrassment of genders —always use all nouns in the plural and without qualifying adjectives. Do not say, for instance, *I love this old church*, for then you've got to know whether "church" is male or female. Say rather *One loves churches*. This lends a plain and even a quite lofty flavour to one's style, full of an eighteenth century tincture, a Ben Franklin aphoristic and moralizing touch that must be soothing to the French ear. And indeed one is perpetually charmed by the infinite courtesy with which they hear us mangle their pronunciations. I was trying to imagine what would be the English phonetic equiva-

lent for some of my utterances. When I ask the way to a village church it probably sounds to the native as though someone said to me, at home, "Ow wass it pleeze pozeable for locating ze sharsh?" These difficulties, and one's necessary limitations to the simplest formulæ (avoiding all *situations presque inénarrables*) have their charms, however; particularly for one whose trade is to deal in language. One uses one's own tongue so glibly, the words arriving in the mouth almost unconsciously, that it is an enormous advantage to study seriously, at a mature age, the actual hooks and couplings by which a foreign speech is put together—how, to pursue my railway metaphor, these little baggage trucks of nouns and adjectives are made into trains, conjunctioned to the engine of a verb, and puffed off to carry their cargo to some destination. You find yourself looking (with a new respect) at an English sentence to remind yourself just how it is done. Was not one of the secrets of Mr. Conrad's rich appeal that he always dealt with English in the tenderness of one to whom it came not by birthright but as a long arduous acquisition? So you go about your rounds in the town, picking up a phrase here and there, sticking in a subjunctive now and then for good measure, acquiring the dainty technic of shopping, and blundering in and out of places that look for all the world like square-meal restaurants but

which serve only liquids. "Don't the French ever *eat* anything?" cried Titania in despair, one evening when we had tried three or four cafés looking for some supper, but could find nothing but *apéritifs* and music. Of course, one learns the stunts in time; just as the pipe smoker can even learn to inure himself to that Scaferlati tobacco; but at first the instinct of the foreigner leads him with unerring certainty to do the wrong thing.

Our dallying in Cherbourg was not mere indolence, nor due entirely to the picturesqueness of the town. There we were solidly based on two of the very few bathtubs in the Cotentin—a great advantage to travellers with small children—and these large china receptacles constituted our G. H. Q. while prospecting for a summer home farther down the coast. That was why we covered so much country with M. Le Cornu, and as an introduction to French ways of living and thinking I urge house-hunting. You see innumerable domestic interiors of all sorts, and you learn, away from the life of hotels, how wrong are those travellers who insist on thinking of the French as rapacious. I recall one of our early expeditions when we passed a travelling coffee vendor, sitting on his little cart which was being pulled through the dust and hot sunshine by two hardy mongrels. His dogs were both so like an animal I was once greatly attached to, a certain Mr. Gissing, that I

couldn't resist asking him if it would *dérange* him if I took a photo. He was quite pleased, cried his dogs to a smart trot, and came gaily along while I snapped the lens. In the subsequent palaver he spoke very fast and with a difficult accent, saying several times that it was very warm, and something about a *bistro* a little farther along the road. This I didn't quite grasp, but supposed he was suggesting that having taken his picture I might now stand him a drink. But when I began to haul out some money I was embarrassed to find that he had been offering to treat *me;* and this though we had spun past him in a car and probably looked to him like millionaires. The situation was painful, but we got by it all right, and he accepted, after some protest, a five-franc note. He said it was too much money for a drink, but I insisted that the dogs also should have one. And at this moment the Urchiness created a diversion by falling into a deep ditch of water hidden in the long grass at the roadside. When we left him our friend was sitting happily at the *bistro*, enjoying—if the sign was to be trusted—*Consommations du Premier Choix.*

By now, of course, settled householders in a Norman village, Titania and I know the essentials of rustic etiquette. We know how to bicycle into a strange hamlet, pick out the most promising café, and take our lunch sitting at a bare table in the

kitchen, looking into the mouth of an enormous fireplace where a kettle of sausages is simmering over a charcoal fire; where the bare table is spread with knives and a huge haunch of bread, and you get your share of the great platter of vegetables that goes round to the teamsters and others who are on the adjoining bench. And you see the copper utensils on the wall, the war helmet in the place of honour over the hearth, and the mother-of-pearl clock. The two-franc *pourboire* you leave behind must not be given as a tip but as a gift to the small girl who watches shyly from the corner. These delicacies of deportment were beyond us in our early days in Cherbourg; but it was M. Le Cornu, I think, who set us on the right road. If you will note what are the hostelries approved by Baedeker, then you can find us at the opposite end of the town. Never, unless you introduce the topic, will your hostess admit that she knows you are foreigners. But she gives away her awareness by one invariable sign: she'll ask you if you would like to have tea with your meal.

And now, as I look back at my memories of Cherbourg, it is evening, that soft, gradual dusk; and though it may be drizzling a bit you stroll along the docks. Across the bridge, now out of use while the lock gates are open, the special train for Paris, crammed with the *Berengaria's* passengers, is just pulling out. Waiting for the bridge to re-

open is a whole cross-section of the French provinces: the tiny trolley car with two girls as conductor and driver; the workman with his string bag carrying home two bottles of wine; the market cart with the dog underneath doing his best to help pull; small boys in black pinafores; a woman in *sabots* with a fishing pole; a little Citroën (like a yacht's dinghy on wheels) with a little man in it, equally minute and dapper, on his way to dance and game at the Casino. Those delightful little Citroëns! Even the name sounds fragrant, and I feel sure they ought to smell not of gasoline but of perfumery. Nothing is so precious as those first impressions of a foreign soil; never again are your eyes quite so sharply alert to the valuable comedies of contrast. And those passengers whom I see now, rolling in their lighted compartments toward Paris, may perhaps be right in hastening so wildly toward the capital. But I have a strange feeling that all the breath and essence of France may not necessarily be in Paris; and sometimes one wants to do one's devotions singly, not among other thousands.

And so when the time came to leave Cherbourg it was with the surprised feeling, not at all anticipated, that one had made a new friend, a friend who could not henceforth be omitted from one's happy memories. On that last evening, smoking a pipe along the quay, I met a young man from the

real-estate agency who had joined some of our excursions and had been specially patient with our absurdities. We had a stroll together, and his English being about on a level with my French, we promised to correspond each in the other's language. His letter happens to be in reach of my hand, for I have been using it to prop up one leg of my typewriter, the table in the thatched cottage where I am now writing being a bit uneven. I take the liberty of copying a bit of it, as I can think of no better testimony in honour of French friendliness.

Do you remember [he writes], of the nice evening passed in Jobourg? A evening like that one was too short. Yes, because it is always very tedious to leave some nice people. I think the little Christopher [he means the Urchin] is pleased to pass her holidays in the beautiful country of the France. I want he must be enjoying of the France and of the French people for he must be latter a friend of the France. I think, dear sir, that you can manage with your French. I think so because you speak already very well. May be after your stay in France it shall be impossible for you to speak English. It must not.

I am pleased to send you this little letter and be sure if you may be I am a friend for you.

I think that the typewriter will march very steadily with that little wad of affectionate sim-

plicity for a support. A common phrase in France nowadays is "*Plutarch a menti*"—"Plutarch lied." You see the book of that title in all the bookshops. And, as far as Cherbourg is concerned, Baedeker lied too.

WHEELS ON PARNASSUS

THE bicycle, the bicycle surely, should always be the vehicle of novelists and poets. How pleasant if one could prove that a decline in literary delicacy followed the disappearance of the bike from American roads. After eleven years without one, here I am in a country where the bicycle abounds. My memory returns to old Shotover, the tall green curio I bought in England in 1910. She had a queer double frame, much stared at by rustics from Basel to Auld Reekie, from the Cotswolds to the Wash. Delightful British pushbikes, some of them even used to have multiple gears. Not that I am disloyal to the automobile. For I know the peculiar thrill of motor cars, how one learns to love the steady drumming of their faithful organs, the gallant arch of the hood as it goes questing, like a sentient creature, along dazzling roads. Yet in a car you are carried; on a bike you go. You are yourself integral with the machine.

The bicycle is to me a kind of symbol of those old careless days long ago. How cheering to find still posted, on country inns in France, the em-

blem of the Cyclists' Touring Club of which one was once a member, and whose little identification card was accepted (Oh, simple days!) as a passport. One always sought out the hostelries with that sign, because they were supposed to give the members a reduced rate for "bed and breakfast." And how they hated to do it. One wonders if the young French person on that Rhine steamer remembers herself of the three eccentric youths with the C. T. C. badges. She was a damsel of rather free manners, just the kind of person Jean Jacques was always encountering on his travels. The C. T. C. emblems roused her curiosity, and she asked what they were. "Mademoiselle," replied one of the trio, "it is the Club Terrestre de la Chasteté."

And speaking of the C. T. C., has everyone forgotten the jolly old L. A. W.—the League of American Wheelmen? That too had its literary flavours, for was not Mr. S. S. McClure editor of its magazine?

It is when you come back to bicycling, after long dispractice, that you realize how exquisite a physical art it is. Once more that strong tightness of the thigh muscles, once more the hot sun on the shoulder blades, the odd shift in bodily *tenue* when you have to push on foot up a long hill (comparable to the flatness of walking after skating, or that uneasiness in a ship in still harbour after days at sea). As you spin down aisles of hedgeway

you can ponder the daintily equilibrated poise that makes those two wheels your obedient Siamese twins. I read once of a savage chief in Africa who was given an old bicycle and a top hat, in exchange for a caravan of ivory, I suppose. He traversed the sunbaked paths near his village riding the one and wearing the other, hallooing with innocent glee. I can understand his feelings. If one wears a hat at all while biking it might as well be the silk cylinder of fashion, to express a sense of psychic and carnal welfare. In a recent play, *Roger Bloomer*, one of the characters remarked, "I wear a silk hat as a charm against passion." The bicycle also is an amulet against various disorders. To see before one a forked or meandering road, a wedge-towered Norman church in the valley, to explore the fragrance of lanes like green tunnels, to hear the whispering hum beneath you and the rasp of scythes in a hayfield, all this might well be homœopathic against passion, for it is a passion itself.

But these letters are adjured to have some bearing on literary matters. So let's take this turning on the left (which leads across links toward the sea) and sit on the dunes to think out our rearward idea. A warm southwest gale is creaming the surf onto the beach; the sandy turf, sheep-cropped, is speckled with small pink and yellow flowers.

An odd feeling comes sometimes to a writer who has long carried in the knapsack of the mind some notion that he wants to put in ink. It is a sensation I can only describe as Getting Ready to Write. Those phantoms of imagination, so long halted frozen in mid-gesture, begin to show marks of animation. In my particular case, it is now four and a half years that I have seen them sitting in their absurd unchanged attitudes. No wonder they are stiff: one of them (what a dear she is!) told me her foot had gone to sleep. They are sitting round a table, it is a birthday party. You would think that the cake must be very stale by this time, the little red candles guttered out. But no: I can see them burning steadily, the bright untrembling candles of a dream. Even in the puppet postures where I left them I can see those phantoms strangely show an air of expectation. Something must be done about it.

In these moods bicycling seems perfectly the right employ. It is all very well to say to yourself that you are not thinking as you wheel serenely along; but you *are*, and that sure uncertainty of the cyclist's balance, that unconsciously watchful suspension (solid on earth yet so breezily flitting) seems to symbolize the task itself. The wheel slidders in a rut or on a slope of gravel; at once, by instinct, you redress your perpendicular. So, in the continual joy and disgust of the writer's work,

he dare not abandon that difficult trained alertness. How much of the plain horror and stupidity is he to admit into his picture? how many of the grossly significant minutiæ can he pause to include? how often shall he make a resolute fling to convey that incomparable energy of life that should be the artist's goal above all? These are the airy tinkerings of his doubt: and as he passes from windy hill-top to green creeks and grazings sometimes the bicycle sets him free. He sees it all afresh: nothing, nothing has ever been written yet: the entire white paper of the world is clean for his special portrait of all hunger, all joy, and all vexation. In the sunny market-place, sitting on a warm stone under the statue of the *poilu*, he feels that noble thrill of living and being surrounded by similar life. Even ants in an ant-hill feel it too, I dare say.

Blundering with a foreign language there sometimes comes a moment when you find, astonished, that you have talked for a few sentences fluently and without conscious choice. Just so, in unexpected purities of feeling, you are aware that for an instant you might almost have stammered a phrase or two of the strangest foreign tongue, the universal cryptograms of beauty that legislatures are too busy to hear. This was the language, for instance, that Llewelyn Powys glimpsed between the lines when he read Matthew Arnold in the

wilderness of Africa. He tells about it in his glorious *Black Laughter*, a book richly written, with the savour of an old, old speech; one of those rarest of books, a book written not in dialect but in English sound and sparkling from the ancient cellars of the language.

So you climb on your bicycle again, renewing in your nostrils the summer sweetness of this divine and anxious land, and swim off with the Southwest at your back. What a book it would be if one could truly write just a straight record of one human farce. What an audacious book, with the title *For I so Loved the World.*

THE SENSE OF SIGNIFICANCE

THE field at the top of the cliff, overlooking the sea, has been shaved; cut down to short, soft stubble, blanched and sweetened by the sun. The skylarks who nested in those cool tangles of long grass have moved elsewhere, I suppose; perhaps to the fairy isles of Chausey that notch the western brim. Chausey might well be a sort of Penguin Island. After watching its purple stains on the skyline through a month of clear sunsets, it was rash to pay them actual visit. Rewarded rashness, though, for even in a drizzle there was no disillusion in those seaweed-matted clumps of granite, joined by webs of sand into one continent at the ebb, insulated again at high tide, a sprinkle of surf-banged crags. A tiny strait serves as harbour for a few smacks; there is an abandoned fort (of Napoleon III's era); a stone chapel with the customary ship model hanging as flattery to the gods of gale. Even the dour château of M. Renault, the automobile magnate, suggests that special tinge of feeling that one describes as Romance. One remembers it was not far away, in

similar scenes, that Victor Hugo found his *Travailleurs de la Mer.*

So the blue scissorings of Chausey, seen from our seaward cliff at sunset, have not lost by visit their fairyland suggestion. Even are they more precious by memory of the homeward voyage, when the *Mouette* (an open launch of fifty feet, carrying one sail) wallowed and capered in a drenching southwester. Unsheltered, the crowded passengers sat trickling, and in more violent rollings were hardly appeased by the master's remark "*N'y a pas de danger, n'ayez pas peur!*" Always alert for the frolic French subjunctive, I remembered that it is used chiefly in expressions suggesting uncertainty and doubt. Ladies were ill, even quite hardy masculines aware of that quaint impulse to yawn which is the token of an entrail not wholly stable. But excellent is the stoicism of the Gaul. A stout grizzled gentleman wearing the ribbon of Madagascar campaigns many years ago, who had lunched on shrimps, rhubarb confiture, *Calvados* (brandy made from cider), and other notables of Norman picnicking, was faintly tinct with green under his summer tan. Yet when a special spout of spray came inboard down his nape, he merely shifted a little on sopping quarters and remarked "*Ce n'est pas chic.*" He is a rather famous Parisian modiste, which somehow makes his phrase all the more pleasant.

The tall cliffs of Granville were a welcome sight looming through pelting squalls, as our *Mouette* came boiling and staggering under their lee.

On these grassy headlands, idly watching the profile of the old fortressed rock a mile away, there is much to ponder which is not idle. Studying the long bend of the gulf beneath, the various tinting of sea, the brown-purple shadow masses in distant scarps of cliff, a writer is tempted to envy the pictorial artist who has his fundamental material so seizable, so suggestive, so takeably to hand. The story-teller's job seems desperately more nebulous. Totally from gossamer nothing, your effect shall be contrived; without even the dexterous physical amusement that helps to keep the painter absorbed and happy. Against that sword-coloured sky, vast with the empty glimmer of evening, you are promptly aware of human mirth and movement as a silhouetted pattern. How, out of all that confusing richness, to choose the exactly necessary trifles that will propose the desired emotion? One can only fall back on the instinctive Sense of Significance, that subtle and massive intuition that must be (for every type of creator, I suppose) the captain of his seven deadly senses.

The Sense of Significance! Yes, that occult and instantaneous decision that certain gestures, certain random incidents, are necessary parts of the artistic composition of our own world. This

instinct is capricious and quick, often one is puzzled to know why such petty observations come full of meaning, magically confluent with the dark undercurrent of the mind. I can only illustrate by mentioning shortly a few poor silly glimpses that seemed to me lately (I did not know why) to have peculiar magic. It is hard to be so terse; but as that excellent Abel Bonnard said the other day, "*Il n'est pas mauvais de s'exercer à parler en bref de ce qu'on aime.*"

At Plymouth: my first sight of England in eleven years. The *Lancastria* at anchor under the green steeps where Drake played the world's most famous game of bowls. Coming down the cabin alley I saw a gull poised outside. He floated there on wings, framed in the brass circle of the porthole, looking at me with a cruel fanatical eye. Just behind him was the little harbour where the *Mayflower* set sail. Was there accusation in his look? "What have *you* done to justify the faith of those tough yachtsmen?"

On a great spread of beach at low tide; a warm vacant afternoon, the smell of hay blowing down from the cliffs mixed with the strong acid of the sea. Far above, continual twitter of larks, the ear unconsciously sharpening itself to follow their wiry tinkle to the height where it blurs with your

own blood-stroke. In that sunny vacuum of feeling, a chime from the church a mile away. The wave of deep sound booms overhead. Then, after the passage of the note, a smaller following vibration, an actual quaver of air felt rather than heard, a magically secret ripple in the blue, the gently churning wake of those thick pushing clangs. That infinitesimal tremble, swimming in soft space, was like hearing the actual movement of some strange law of life. A French lady told me the other day that on that beach, in a certain slope of sunlight, she had seen one of the bathers apparently surrounded by a halo of brightness. I know that one afternoon I went far along the coast, toward a weatherbeaten house that stands solitary by the sea. It had beckoned me since I first saw its outline in the distance. When I got near it I recognized it at once. I had seen that same house, or at least one sufficiently like it, a year before, in a dream.

A heavy tinker's wagon, drawn by one horse. Underneath, harnessed to the axle, a small terrier, pulling mightily, doing his best to help along. His tongue hung dripping, he strained fiercely at his leather hitchings, his tail curled upward with delighted enthusiasm. Why did that dog suddenly strike me as full of parable? I looked again. The wagon was going down a steep hill, and both horse

and tinker were doing their best to hold back the load against the grade. But their valiant consort was still doing his forward possible, as usual.

Bicycling in a green woodland, round a corner, I found a little avenue among trees. Bordered with flowers it led to an oddly fantastic house, an old stone mansion that had been built over with modern additions. And above the front door, a large statue of seated Buddha. Reading Montaigne one afternoon in the garden, I heard a melancholy chanting outside the wall, the slow shuffle of feet passing by. So many songs and oddities go down a French village road that presently one is too incurious to look out; besides, I was absorbed in the good old gentleman's apologies for his stupidity, his ignorance even of the names of the vegetables in his garden. But I heard our old Julie click the latch and look out. What is it? I called. She came to me with a grave face. "A funeral," she said; and added, with a certain relish, "*Un enterrement de première classe.*"

But nor sunset ponderings, nor reading Montaigne, will help one much in trying to set in order the task that he has planned. These things abide the fortune of the inkwell. Even Montaigne must sometimes have laboured and brought forth a mouse.

THE LATIN QUARTER

(1924)

IT'S amusing to come back after twelve years to the little book-lined Rue de la Sorbonne with its tinny chimes and tiny hotels; and to find the old Gerson, that seemed so darkly wicked and Murgeresque in one's student era, really so placid and respectable. How adorably satanic we believed it in those rainy spring days of 1912! Even the staircase was an *escalier à tire-bouchon:* a corkscrew—six steep spirals to be climbed, but a real *gradus ad Bohemiam* which gave an agreeable sense of unbottling the bright vintage of hilarity; though the three young men in the attics had little need of real corkscrews. Cocoa was their frugal brew, cooked for themselves. With excited awe they gazed into that grimy little courtyard at the rear, where a young woman used to come to the window, in occasional lustres of sunshine, to shake out her long hair and bask herself in smallclothes. She had merely been shampooing, I dare say: but these lads asked themselves, with

all Mark Twain's eagerness, was this the fabled *grisette?* But there are few Rapunzels nowadays. That virginal notion of the gay sinfulness of Paris, inalienable conviction of every Anglo-Saxon youth, can never quite be recaptivated. The transplanted Greenwich Villagers who are said to frequent the *Dôme* and the *Rotonde* probably degust the same ecstasy. The half-world (so those logical students of 1912 figured it) would naturally be divided into two quarters—the Latin Quarter and Montmartre. They spent their time coasting from one to the other, occasionally pausing (in purple jacket and velvet béret) at the American Express office, to give the despised "tourists" a valuable glimpse of Life with the dotted i. Their spirit was as engagingly frolic as that of the fellow in blue jerkin and asses'-ears hood who rides the donkey in the Parchment Fair painting in the cloister of the Sorbonne. If it had been customary to express devotion to this university by sweaters with a large S on the chest, I feel sure they would have worn them. They knew nothing of *Dômes* and *Rotondes:* they wrote their letters at the Café de la Source on the Boul' Mich', because Stevenson had done so at their age. Because they were young libertads, they went to hear Jaurès. . . . And now Le Penseur has left the Panthéon and Jaurès is going there. Murger and de Musset and Baudelaire aren't what the young Latin Quarter reads

now: it reads André Gide. I was going to say something about M. Gide's *Corydon*, but I have just seen a little troop of clear-eyed and divinely placid American librarians trotting reverently into the Panthéon. I prefer not to disturb them with the odd matters that French intellectuals discuss.

It is in a different spirit that the twelve-years-older student revisits the Latin Quarter, the Promised Land of booksellers, where each byway seems one more shelf in an endless library. Certainly not in a disillusion, but in a changed illusion; for life, I hope, is a series of gently shifting hallucinations. The Latin Quarter, where we students feel so instinctively *chez nous*, still has its divine magic. Still, absurdly enough, the sight of those innumerable books, or the pale statue of Comte, the pensive stone faces of Pasteur and Victor Hugo, thrill us to adventure more burningly our own imagined toils. But we carry in our pocket nowadays a little roll of *papier gommé transparent* to mend the brittle ten-franc notes that have such a way of coming in half. It's a kind of symbol.

We have had—in these twelve years—to mend so many scraps of paper with transparent adhesives. We have learned that even the brave life of literature and the arts has its hokums and trickeries. That it is not always the man with the most conical beard and broadest-brimmed black

hat who is the greatest poet. Even the Quarter no longer proclaims the Rights of Man, "in the presence of the Supreme Being," quite so confidently as in 1791 or thereabouts. We have learned that—even along the sacred Boul' Mich'—the best-known products of the American arts are Jackie Coogan, J. O. Curwood, Wrigley's "*friandise à mâcher*," and . . . "Esquimaux Brick!" (Poor old Esquimaux Pie! Who would have expected to find it resurrected here?) And we note that the *Nouvelles Littéraires* can be just as carelessly proof-read and as full of pseudo-critical tripe as any of our own literary organs.

But do these little gummed transparencies invalidate our legal tender? Not a bit! Our dreams and amusements are all the merrier. We revel in the ingenuity of fraudulent book-jackets, admiring their sheer genius—*Ce récit galant narquois, qui nous revèle les intimités féminines, fait songer à certains contes du XVIII^me^ siècle. Il en a la forme agréable, la psychologie furtive, les audaces élégantes.* We almost pray for a rainstorm, to perfect the luxury of browsing in the book porches of the Odéon. If, in a famous theatre whose green-room is placarded with photos of managers and authors enchantingly bearded, who *look* so like great artists, we encounter only a dull, dirty farce, does it not set one dreaming all the more valiantly of the piece one imagines from one's own inkpot?

If one's eyes were always in the shop windows, one would miss the little coop on the pavement where an ingenious bartender has put a kennel with a trough of running water—Louigi's Dog's Bar, he calls it. The French are on much more intimate terms with dogs than we, and talk to them more understandingly. Compare Senator Vest's unholy palaver with what Charles Baudelaire wrote in "Petits Poèmes en Prose."—That the French have at least one frankly canine trait, I need not insist.

How one would like to condense, into a few hundred words, the exquisite flavour of the Quarter. In those quiet streets round St. Sulpice I study the windows of undertakers, stationers, pastry cooks, ecclesiastical publishers and tailors. How delightful it must be to get a bill from a French doctor. Thus he goes about it:

LE DOCTEUR G. RIBAUT

prie.....
d'agréer l'expression de ses sentiments
les plus distingués et suivant l'usage,
lui adresse le note de ses honoraires
s'élevant à la somme de.....

Or, if you are a parson and want a new hat, one of those sublime shallow-crown black platters, how pleasant to be able to get one that is marked

Dernier Style. What business has a priest got worrying about the latest style in cassocks and soup-plate hats? This bothered me. In the vacation silence of the Sorbonne corridors, a familiar kind of protest is scrawled on the wall. We can translate it, gently, by "The examiners who flunked me are swine." The incessant ringing of the tramways keeps one hungry: they sound like boarding-house dinner bells at home. One goes back to the little coffee-bar, where the rolls are always waiting, split and buttered, in a neat criss-cross pile, on the zinc counter.

But what is the reason of that curious intellectual exultation that the Quarter gives, that fecundity of impulse it offers to the artist, that sense that the mind is in its birthright element? I think you find its secret best in the Luxembourg gardens. Behind the flamboyant formality of the flower beds, behind the charming heedlessness and enjoyment, is a strange flavour of peaceful melancholy, of incredulity, of impossible hopes. Utterly different from New York, where the mind flows with the moment, here it seems as it were to touch bottom psychologically. There is a background of enchanted despair. The toy yachts are becalmed in the basin and will never come to port. The Medici fountain smells of sodden leaves and is a grand place to be sad. The great dusky Polyphemus looms over the sprawling lovers as

the great laws of life eavesdroop over us all—proclaiming in the presence of the Supreme Being! The young men in black hats are goaded by the most unpleasant passions! (I refer you to M. Gide.) Outside the Comédie Française (the Comedy!) our darling de Musset's statue reminds us that the songs of despair are the sweetest of all.

I wonder if I'm wrong? I'm not trying to express my own feelings, which are trivial and don't matter. I am trying to serve as a film to photostat the genius of the place. In these brilliant Luxembourg flower beds I seem specially aware of this ancient channel of feeling in which emotions run. The Quarter is rich ground for the thinker because it has perfected, and made gracious and proud, the art of being unhappy.

(1925)

I am waiting to hear the chime of the Sorbonne church strike eleven: I wanted to hear it again, to get the right word for it. *Tinny*, which I used last year, is certainly not right. It is a light, cool, insouciant little chime; but I don't catch the just adjective, and can only advise you to listen for it yourself. It is not ponderous nor monitory nor deeply musical: in fact it seems (as I suppose is natural in a Latin Quarter belfry) hardly a religious voice at all. It has in it something of the

accent of Ronsard, something of Diderot, and just a faint clatter of glassware from the zinc café-bar round the corner. I will leave it at that, or it will use up all my space.

Paris would hardly be Paris for me if I didn't hear the Sorbonne bells; though it is disconcerting to hear them striking while you are writing an article: another fifteen minutes gone and you have only descended a dozen lines. And this ground-floor room at the corner of the Place (in case there are ladies in the audience) is the perfect chamber for high-spirited young women. For, if the toy *ascenseur* is "immobilized for reparations," as sometimes happens, there are no stairs to climb; and the passage outside our door is one long stretch of mirrors, where Titania can walk up and down adjudging the effect of a new hat just arrived from Mme. Sorbier in the rue Lafayette. But it grows very chilly toward midnight at the end of September. *Chauffage Centrale* has a genial sound on the notepaper; but when, one wonders, does it begin? If it hadn't been for my well-loved *zinc* (as you are to call a small bar of that sort, pronouncing it *zank*) which is warm and bright and full of Chinamen playing cards, I should hardly have enlivened my fingers enough to write this letter. But the café-crême with cognac only costs ten cents, and makes the most intimate of chauffages centrales.

I understand now why the Quarter spends its evenings in the cafés—to keep warm. I should have liked to bring in a small electric heater; but the list of prohibitions placarded on the wall is peremptory:

> All degradations in the rooms are at the charge of the guest. It is forbidden: to do cooking in the rooms, to wash linen, to branch any apparatus on the electric canalization and to modify in whatever it may be the existing installations, to introduce any animal or to make cooking come in from outside.

I haven't really much gift for loitering in cafés. I wish I had: for then I might be able to find out, what has always disquieted me, whether the Boul' Mich' prowlers who look so like poets really are. The fellow with the yellow raincoat, and yellow ringlets as long and curly as Bonny Prince Charley's; and the other fellow with the sleek bobbed hair, the tight-waisted coat, the monocle and cane and open polo-shirt; they are still strolling the pavement just as they were a year ago. What I want to know is, how many poems have they written in the meantime? I always have a horrid fear that they will prove to be merely commissionaires for the Phiteesi shoe-store that appals my eye in that sacred precinct; heaven only knows how profound a disillusion it was to my spirit to find that word Phiteesi in the Latin

Quarter: fortunately even the most learned doctors of the Sorbonne probably don't suspect its meaning. But a man who has strength enough left to wrestle against disillusion has not really been damaged; his fancy dives inward and becomes more precious. I cling desperately to the hope that the Chinamen are not the only romantic figures along the Boulevard; that the young men whose signed photographs are thick over the comfortable fireplace in Sylvia Beach's charming bookshop ("To dear Sylvia with just oceans of love") really are geniuses; that these Murgerian profiles are truly libertines and literary critics. You remember O. Henry's little story about the hayseed who looked so obviously a hayseed that no bunco-man dared go after him. But he really was a hayseed. And Walt Whitman teaches me to be cautious. Walt would have been very miserable along the trottoir of the Boul' Mich', for no one would have noticed him. Yet, though he looked so like a poet that few good Philadelphians would touch him, he really was one.—And I don't even believe that Walt's French, deservedly merrimented by his readers, was any worse than that of the average American in Paris.

But I love to think of the young American of the better sort who comes, like the *naïf* scholar-gipsy he is, to make his pilgrimage to Paris. It is delightful to think of him, scandalized in small

things that he may be, if he has understanding, uplifted in great. He has heard that the book-boxes along the Quais are the shrine of priest and philosopher; and the statue of Voltaire grins delightedly at his amazement to find the work most prominently displayed is "Fleshly Attraction, Translated from the French," carefully wrapped in strong twine. For that is the kind of delightful Vanity Fair and cheapjackery the world is: surely the photograph-pimp wouldn't work so hard unless real Beauty were near by; nor would it be worth while for so many people to dress like poets unless the sources of real poetry were just around the corner. And I doubt if my imagined pilgrim ever buys *Les Belles Flagellantes de New York* even if he sees it every day on his way toward the Place Vendôme to ask for mail. If he has the jocund humour I like to credit him with, he has a smile when he goes into an antique-shop in the Boulevard St. Germain where he has seen some fine eighteenth century leather-bound 12-mos in the window. He finds that they have been gutted to make cigarette-boxes, though still preserving, outwardly, their booklike appearance. He exclaims a little in protest at old books having been served so—"Ah," says the young woman, "they were only religious books."

The sapient pilgrim, if he were wise, would serve an apprenticeship in the provinces; he

should be forbidden even to approach Paris until he had learned such elementary rules as never to allow a bottle of wine to be plunged into an ice-bucket—as the Paris restaurants have debauched themselves into doing under the notion that Americans like everything iced. He should avoid the eyes of Rue de la Paix jewellers peering fixedly over their velvet window-curtains, and should gaze in fascinated horror at the engravers' shops where Egyptian princes have their visiting cards displayed and among them the imposing pasteboard

MONSEIGNEUR GLASS
BISHOP OF SALT LAKE

He should learn first, what the cosmopolitan glamour of Paris is not so likely to teach, something of the unspoiled simplicities of the French countryside. It would do him no harm to hunt out the French equivalent of the old lady from Dubuque. Then he will be capable, I think, of distinguishing the true Paris, who makes herself so scarce for untutored eyes. Then he will see that, faithful to her old motto, this real Paris, loved by all the world's lovers, fluctuates but is never merged. He won't waste his clear sunsets at some rowdy café but will see the little flotilla of toy yachts skimming the Luxembourg basin. Where the woman with a bunch of balloons stands at the

head of the steps, the light pours through her red and blue globes; seen down the gold-bronze avenue they are translucent like floating jewels. And that mysterious sound of horses' hoofs that often comes at midnight down the narrow rue de la Sorbonne, will grow to have its mystic meaning. It is the tramp of some pilgrim cavalcade; it is the students of the world, coming as they always came, in faith and hope and gaiety, to the doors of the Sorbonne. Loved as perhaps no other city has ever been loved, our illusions are worthy of her.

THE WORKS OF M. CHAIX

M. PROUST has been greatly complimented on his rich treatment of the scruples of human psychology, but there is another French writer, widely read, who is also a master of infinitesimal detail. I refer to M. Chaix, the author (or at any rate compiler) of the Livrets-Chaix, a series of volumes not less endless than M. Proust's, and conscientiously revised and reissued every month or so. M. Chaix's books are not only full of useful information and romantic suggestion, but they are also a whole compendium of French ways of thinking. How charmingly he expresses the French passion for minute codification, for getting things logically arranged and stated. M. Chaix is the real encyclopædist of etiquette—of getting things ticketed. And he makes you read between the lines; between vertical lines, indeed; for his books are time-tables.

But oh, much more than mere time-tables. M. Chaix's *livrets* (one for each railway company) are a synopsis of his nation's genius for getting things down in black and white—and then going

ahead as may be most convenient. The French like to have a thing in writing, just to get it out of the way; not necessarily to adhere to it. Every time you buy a ticket at a French railway station you are reminded (by a placard) that according to the law of 1791 the vendor is not compelled to make change if not convenient. This gives you quite a thrill, seems to take you back to the days of Thermidor and Humidor and Cuspidor. But as a matter of fact, you will always get your change.

M. Chaix has the austerity of a great artist. People like John Ruskin and Henry Adams will try to spoil Mont St. Michel and Chartres for you by putting *their* thoughts into your head. But M. Chaix is never intrusive. All the loveliest places in France are mentioned in his works, but he never tells you what you ought to think about them. He confines himself to the real essentials, viz., how and when you can get there. Henry Adams will din you with his charming palaver about soaring gothic; but M. Chaix soberly states that the trains reach Mont St. Michel at 13:15, 18:5 and 19:30. He evidently worked it out with Mme. Poulard, the innkeeper, as those are just the times to order an omelet. Not a sparrow falls to the ground, by which I mean to say not a traveller misses a connection, but M. Chaix knows why it shouldn't have happened. He probably tried to "effectuate his transit" by way of Ver-

sailles Chantiers, where (if he had read the footnote on page 37) only first-class passengers without baggage were admitted to that train.

But I must give you (Oh! for more ample space) some notion of M. Chaix's attention to detail. It is he who makes plain the uplifting influence of American passengers upon dining-car tariffs. Lunch and dinner in the wagon restaurant, *vin non compris*, cost 7 francs and 12 francs; but in the boat trains, 18 francs. On the boat trains, wine costs $7\frac{1}{2}$ francs a bottle as against 3.25 in the regular expresses. M. Chaix tells you, to the minute, at what time you can eat on every train where eating is possible. Suppose you are going from Paris to Granville and want to lunch in the second sitting. You can eat from 12:15 to 13:47, not a minute longer. He has foreseen everything: if, for instance, you are a voyager of the second class and spend more than half an hour in the wagon restaurant between mealtimes, he knows that you will owe the difference between the second- and first-class fare "for the traject unduly effectuated."

Let it not be thought, however, that M. Chaix is hard of heart. Whenever children or dogs are concerned, he strikes a note of tenderness.

> In principle (he says) dogs are not admitted in the passenger carriages; but the company will place in

special compartments travellers who do not wish to be separated from their dogs. Moreover dogs of modest stature, enclosed in cages, boxes, or baskets, can be kept in the compartments with the assent of their fellow passengers.

I find many evidences of M. Chaix being a family man, for he is specially kindly toward *Nombreuses Familles*. A Family Ticket of Going and Returning, he tells us, may be had when there travels with the parents a son of less than twenty-one or a daughter of less than twenty-five, and this ticket may also include "the ascendants of this infant; its celibate brothers and sisters of whatever age; two domestics (a male or female cook, a valet or chambermaid or infant's nurse) and if necessary a wet nurse." Below the age of three, he continues, infants pay nothing, on the condition that they are carried on the knees of their family. And among the baggages that may be taken in your compartment with you, he allows babies' bathtubs.

M. Chaix does his best to instil a spirit of foresight and prudence into his flock. I don't suppose any one, in the history of travel, ever followed his instructions for getting a carriage on arrival in Paris. This is what he wants you to do:

Address, 48 hours beforehand, either a letter or a telegram to the Special Carriage Bureau indicating the

station and hour of arrival, the number of voyagers, the destination, and the type of carriage desired, whether automotive or of animal traction.

If you want to reserve a berth in a sleeper, M. Chaix urges you to go even more cautiously about it.

The demand for renting a berth must be made at least 4 days in advance; the applicant must deposit, at the same time, as an evidence of good faith, in the hands of the Station Master, a sum of 40 francs. If for any cause the reservations are not utilized on the day and train specified, the totality of the advance payment is definitely acquired by the Administration.

But I think that even M. Chaix feels this to be a bit severe, for he follows by listing the stations where pillows and blankets may be rented by those who find themselves compelled to make overnight journeys not contemplated four days in advance.

If anything goes wrong in your travels, you mustn't blame M. Chaix, for he has told you everything, even down to listing the stations where only passengers without baggages and "dogs with companions" are allowed to board the train. Moreover he urges you not to be content with his work, but to inform yourself further at the office in the Hall of the Lost Paces at the St. Lazare station. Sometimes you feel he is a bit of a dreamer, as when he

insists that two children under seven should not occupy more than the space of one adult passenger; sometimes even one suspects him of a gruesome humour, as when he says that a voyager may "renounce an unaccomplished traject" by leaving the train before his destination, provided he also renounces, for the benefit of the administration, the full fare paid for the "uneffectuated totality." Yet certainly he discourages this wanton behaviour, and urges his congregation to be sure that they are not paying more than the stipulated 0.4612 per kilometer for first class, 0.3213 for second, 0.2024 for third.

But I perceive, regretfully, that I haven't given you any notion of the special delightfulness of M. Chaix. His little time-tables are like any other great charms of life, you have to come upon them for yourself. The real fun of M. Chaix is when you take him from your pocket, in some little provincial train, and with one eye on the scenery and one eye on his tables, begin to figure out your next change. You look for the station marked *B* that means a *buffet* or the *b* that means a *buvette;* you see that the train will wait 30 minutes because it is market day at Paimpol; and that Savigny is a "facultative arrest." Or you may idle over even more exciting sections: how, by writing to Mr. G. S. Szlumper, director of Maritime Services, berths may be had in turbine packetboats between Cher-

bourg and Southampton; or of return tickets valid from Fat Thursday until Wednesday of the Cinders. For once you learn, with M. Chaix, how easy it really is to travel, you wonder if some day you may not even graduate into his Supreme Work *The Indicator*—which includes the Grand European Trains Express. In that noble compilation you can work out your "trajects"—not merely in France, but to Rome and Vienna and Petrograd and Constantinople. But for the moment this must be our Facultative Arrest.

A PARIS CROWD

ONE of the delights is that you know no one and no one knows you. That free and solitary passage among multitudes can never quite be attained at home; perhaps only in a foreign city where different language and different aspect of things turn the mind in upon itself for its needed reassurance and composure. There is something divine in the sensation of your secret swim through this human ocean. You carry your own heavy and fragile burden of hopes, anxieties, joys, remorses, and you know that you will not, from *café crême* at breakfast to *café cognac* at midnight, encounter any one who has the faintest concern to share or jostle that curious load. So must the gods have walked among men. And you marvel at those voyagers who hasten to inscribe themselves in the register at the American Express office, to have their names and hotels chronicled by the *Herald*—in short, who so readily abandon that most rare and refined of human pleasures, the perfect incognito.

Perhaps the most thrilling crowd in Paris is the

crowd in Père Lachaise—the crowd of the dead. I wanted specially to see again the monument Aux Morts in its little green ravine. There were some particular graves I should have liked to see, too; but I felt it would be the depth of bad manners to go hunting them out with the aid of a plan. In that perfect democracy of silence only the vulgarest of snobs would be picking and choosing, looking for "famous" tombs. It was a gray drizzling day, the stone-ranked hill was very solitary, and I strolled at random, content (so I found myself rather gruesomely putting it) with the monuments I happened to pass. I will be honest: I had a faint velleity to see the grave of Oscar O'Flaherty Fingalls Wills Wilde (I believe he is buried there) because any man devoted to publishing has a natural interest in the writer who has caused more bogus *de luxe* sets than any other (except perhaps Maupassant?). I wanted to see if the Epstein sphinx which once caused such a row was finally erected. But I didn't find it; and was more than compensated by discovering the tall shaft that the City of Paris has put in memory of her municipal workmen—pipe layers, car conductors, electricians, and others—who have lost their lives in the course of duty.

I don't know (perhaps Sir Thomas Browne or Lord Bacon were the only prowlers who have known) exactly what one feels among these crumblings of mortality. What is our æsthetic of the

dust? Is it a small and shamed superiority, to be still topside the gravel? or is it even more disgusting self-pity? At any rate, that noble Aux Morts, unspeakably beautiful tableau of human grief and courage, sends one away with the thoughts "of things that thoughts but tenderly touch." What a thrilling suggestion it gives of our poor final dignity. You see the dying as they approach the end: they come crouching, haggard, stooped in weakness and fear; but at the sill they straighten, shakingly brave, to face that shut door. The man, more sullen or more fearful, still hangs his head. But the woman's face is lifted, and her hand is gently on his shoulder.

If one tries to be honest, he has to be cautious to note where genteel sentiment begins to slide into mere self-concern. After an hour or so of rambling, Père Lachaise begins to weigh on the mind, and crush the purest æsthetic. You are no longer, as the excellent phrase is, disinterested. That congregated mob of the dead is jumbled in an order as rigorously fantastic as names in an index. (Why should the man who invented gas-lighting have so much smaller a tomb than Napoleon's generals who adjoin him? But come to think of it, perhaps his real monument is in Lamb's essays.) You begin to feel an uneasiness, and speculate on the words *Concession à Perpétuité* cut in so many stones. Yes, you say, we must all concede to Perpetuity;

but in the meantime, where shall we have lunch? If you feel the pricklings of self-pity, I think it sanative to pause on your way out to look at the grave of de Musset, the enchanting poet and wit who was so gorgeously sorry for himself. He asked to have a commiserating willow over his tomb; and I noticed that the growth of the tree has made it necessary to cut away part of the stone, removing one of his own poems that he wanted engraved there. There is a kind of hint in this. More loyal than the willow, his dear old sister sits chaired in stone just behind him, faithfully holding a volume of his poems in her lap.

The preceding paragraphs were written three weeks ago, and have been lying here on the table. If the two merry little chambermaids of the Hotel G—— could read English—as I know they can't —I wonder what they would make of them? But perhaps chambermaids in the Latin Quarter are too sagacious to ratiocinate about the guests. They sit in their little pantry at the foot of the stairs and chirp like canaries; and when you come in, both run out (some day some social scientist will explain why French chambermaids always move in pairs), exclaiming excitedly that there was a telephone call from "The Lady at the Ritz." I wish that the best of life were not so inenarrably humorous! I should like to tell you how two telephone calls (you must take my word for it that the inci-

dent was excellently innocent) vastly improved my status at the tiny Hotel G——.

But I'm glad the earlier sheets lay unmailed, because my notes on the sense of secret solitude in Paris require supplement. They were written when my wandering had been done mostly in the old streets of the Left Side. I have learned since, pleasantly enough, that along the Avenue de l'Opéra or the Rue de Rivoli one is certain to encounter friends from home. That peculiarly intimate feeling of utter anonymity is very real and precious, but like all human sensations it quickly passes into a new phase. Apart from the chance tangency with friends, whom one may welcome either for merriment or for advice, it is remarkable how quickly the transplanted life puts out its new fibres, makes its unconscious adhesions, begins to think of the old women in the newspaper-kiosk or the man behind the coffee-bar as its natural associates. It is not far wrong to say that two of the most amazing phenomena in Paris are the number of Americans in the region of the Opera, and the number of Chinamen along the Boule' Mich'. For the latter phenomenon I have no explanation, unless they have fled the chop suey restaurants of Upper Broadway. My friend the Old Mandarin (who is here, too) notes that these young Celestials wear the biggest and broadest-brimmed of the black hats, that they talk French fluently, and are

greatly esteemed by the girls of the Latin Quarter. Certainly there are enough handsome women in the world to go round, and I am the last to complain: yet some faint residual shred of race instinct causes me a mild surprise when I see a merry young Chinaman with a smart French damsel on each arm. Coming from America, the land of vehement taboos, one is greatly struck by the Parisian freedom from the cruder forms of prejudice. They really seem to dislike no one but their own politicians.

But it is a city, I still feel, uneasy in its inward heart. The statue of the boy offering masks for sale, in the Luxembourg Gardens, is rather symbolic. In his string of faces there is not one that is tragic. Doesn't that contradict your notion, a friend says, that Paris is anxious inside?

I don't think so. What is the purpose of a laughing mask?

JULIE

THIS is Julie's afternoon off. At three o'clock the old coachman, with curly white moustaches, clicks the latch of the garden gate. Julie is ready, in her best black apron and the black felt slippers. Her mysterious little packages, treasures accumulated during the past four weeks, are handed up to Monsieur Lecellier with the warning that they are *bien fragile*. A hat that Titania has given her; some bits of barley sugar and a baby's dress—for the children of her six nephews who own a fishing smack in common; the chintz-covered bottom of a broken trunk tray that has greatly taken her fancy, and the elephant teapot (with his trunk for spout) that Monsieur and Madame brought her from Paris. These, and other small increments, she asks me to inspect, so that I may be assured nothing is exported that does not belong to her. I have tried to persuade Julie it is not necessary to ask our permission every time she wants to eat anything. Accustomed to the manners of American servants, the first time Julie asked if I would permit her to take "a morsel of

bread with some butter," I thought it was irony. But far from it. Julie cannot eat or drink with relish until she has had specific assent from above for every item. She used to bring her plate into the dining room, asking me to put her food on it for her. But I suppose we have debauched her by our constant cry, "*Toujours, Julie, vous prendrez tout ce qu'il vous faut.*"

The hat that Julie is taking with her will go, presumably, to one of her grand-nieces; for Julie, when she wears anything on her head, carries the white linen coiffe of the region. The elephant teapot, I surmise, will lead a carefully guarded life. "*Voici, Julie,*" said Monsieur and Madame, "*c'est un peu symbolique, cela servira pour vous faire penser de la famille américaine qui était comme un éléphant sur vos mains.*" But it is always dangerous to touch the sentimental note with Julie, to hint at possible partings. With sudden wetness in her fierce blue eyes she vows that she would not dream of *using* her elephant teapot. "It's sacred," she says. "It's going in a little corner that I know of." To ease the moment one has rapid recourse to stratagem. "*Dans les soirs d'hiver, Julie, vous pourrez prendre votre tilleul dans l'éléphant.*" Julie knows that when *tilleul* is mentioned it is the signal for a laugh. *Tilleul*, a kind of tea made of lime leaves, is her favourite infusion. It smells and tastes like a fragrant hayloft in summer, and she

recommends it for every bodily weakness. Monsieur, however, mocks himself of it. Never mind, she says; in fifteen years you will be glad to have recourse to that good *tilleul*.

She climbs into the carriage, gasping a little as she balances on one foot, and drives proudly away to town, to see her two older sisters and tell the latest news of her strange American *patrons*. Only once a month can Julie be persuaded to take a couple of hours off, and then chiefly because she has to visit her *propriétaire*, to pay the rent of "the little corner she knows of." Her wages mustn't be given her until she is all ready to embark; she might lose them. The small black purse is firmly gripped in that strong, laborious hand. Her fine golden-gray head is grandly erect as Monsieur Lecellier drives to town. Life is rich in comely humours, and it happens that Lecellier is her next-door neighbour in the Rue St. Jean. And to be driven up that cobbled lane, arriving in triumph with her bundles, must be good medicine for many days of distress in a long, hard life. What fun it would be, did manners permit, to follow her and see exactly what happens.

In two hours Julie will be back, and come hurrying over to the nearby *chaumière* (forgetting, in her innocent eagerness, that it is forbidden ground: *c'est là que Monsieur écrit son livre*). She is anxious to see if Monsieur and Madame are still alive and

well after two dangerous hours unmastiffed; and to report that her sister has sent a present of three pots of jelly. "*Ce pauvre Monsieur! Il n'a jamais assez de confiture.*"

How can I tell you about Julie? It cannot be done. But since we live by attempting the impossible, I can take a few symptoms of her vivid human decency. Where shall we begin, then? At the very bottom, with her feet.

It is the sound of those valiant feet, their busy shuffle to and fro, that I think of most affectionately. Toward the middle of the afternoon, when the white canvas sandals are discarded for the soft felt slippers, Julie's feet begin to play an important part in the household. An occasional groan is heard. Then it is not amiss to suggest: Julie, you had better repose yourself a few minutes and drink a little *tilleul.* This has to be said rapidly, round the corner of the door, or Julie may want to show them to you. Once I didn't get away fast enough (it is amazing how rapidly she can get started on a conversation) and there they were. "*Ce sont bien propres,*" she exclaimed; and indeed they were like ivory. How that does good, she rejoiced, treading them about on the cold stone flags. When one has sixty-four (years, she means) one has *mal aux pieds.* But unless you daily suggest it, Julie will not repose herself even for five minutes. From before six in the morning until after ten at night, those

faithful members are on the go. Perhaps it is along the garden paths, where her fury of washing covers every rosebush with blanching linen; perhaps it is on the road to the farm round the corner, where on muddy days her sabots go clopping for eggs and milk.

Let's try the other end of the picture. Julie is a champion talker. She loves noise. Doors close like artillery; plates come down on the table with a crash. Anything done silently rather frightens her: if you open the kitchen door without preliminary voice or footfall, she whoops with alarm. When our tiny *salle à manger* is packed for *déjeuner*—Monsieur and Madame, three children and Mademoiselle—the din is unbelievable. Every dish is placed with commentary and suggestion. Sometimes Julie tries heroically to restrain herself, for occasionally she has a faint surmise that Madame would relish a little less clamour; but then she hears something said (in our atrocious French) that interests her. She puts her adorable old head on one side, lays a finger against her nose, and waits—with all the excitement of a pleading dog—to catch my eye. This rogueish gesture is irresistible. I look up (if I didn't she would leave the room in tears) and she begins to volley foghorns of talk. At last Titania finds an opportunity to ask for the spoons. "*Ah, je vous fais mal de service!*" the good creature exclaims, conscience-smitten. We all hold our

breaths, thinking now we are settled for a moment. But the Urchiness takes this opportunity to try a few words of French, and Julie bursts into a shout of applause. "*Ah, qu'elle est jolie, ma petite cocotte adorée, ah qu'elle est mignonne!*" Titania knows, wisely enough, that Julie is not one of those who can be compressed into the rigid mould of conventional domestic service. I only wish it were possible, without offence, to reproduce some of her more excellent ejaculations—on the virtues of stewed figs or (anatomically gestured, on her own person) the dangers of bicycle riding.

How happy an artist would be if he could get Julie on canvas. He'd have to do it while she's shelling the beans outside the kitchen door, almost the only time she could hold a pose. Though I'd like to have her as she's vigorously swinging the lettuce in a little wire basket, shaking the water from the leaves. Her handsome blonde head is bent forward, her strong white forearms flash in the sunlight, she rocks a little on her big haunches. I hope I haven't given an impression of a humble, respectful creature; Julie is a true Norman sea wife, with the stubborn pride and thrift of a rocky coast and the sea wife's horror of storms. "*Fermez bien les portes,*" is her last cry every night as she toils up to the attic. "*Nous aurons du vent. Un triste temps!*" In spite of her horror of frogs (they come hopping into the house every evening from

the garden) she will go out to pick pears in the dark and sit late to cook them, having heard a chance remark that stewed pears would be nice for breakfast. Her merciless tirade can be heard a hundred yards down the road if she imagines that the *épicier* has not given Madame his best and at the lowest price. Yet a word of reproach can fill her with black despair. She is one of those who will suffer anything for love but not raise a hand for coercion.

One who has always known England much better than France finds it specially interesting to see these Norman types so akin to the English in form and spirit. In the very look of their villages one seems to see the knotty cradle from which so much of England sprang.

AN OLD HOUSE IN BURGUNDY

BETWEEN two great rivers that run almost parallel but in opposite directions, there are two hill-ranges, the Morvan and the Côte d'Or. Between these hills there is a tranquil region of upland valleys, rich in ruined castles, where the streams are uncertain whether to decant northward to the Seine, or westward to the Loire, or southeast to the Saône. The cider of Normandy, the yellow wine of Anjou, the purple of Burgundy, here balance as ultimate destiny. It is not only the watershed of France, it is the wineshed. But, however geographers may map it, there is no doubt in the region's own sentiment. It looks toward the Mediterranean and the South. When the Reds of Marseilles marched to Paris, they were nowhere more warmly welcomed than at Saulieu. From the vineyard slopes above Beaune, in clearest weather, Mont Blanc can be seen floating in the sky. So they all say, at any rate, and so Stendhal and many others have recorded, though it seems astounding: the peak must be 125 miles away. I could only see the pink roads the same dusky pink as the inward staves of a wine-vat; and the church

in Beaune that is the shape of a bottle. For when you cross that ridge of the Côte d'Or and come (through a village called Bouze) down vineyard slopes in a hot September sun, you are among the world's most famous grapes. The rapid opening and closing of the straight vistas between vine-rows, as the car spins by, makes the fields change and shimmer like twinkling silk. As you study the wine card at the inn at Beaune you can meditate those historic names: Volnay, Pommard, Corton, Chambertin, Montrachet, Clos-Vougeot . . . Clos-Vougeot to whom one of Napoleon's commanders made his regiment present arms when they marched by. It was another military man (Camille Rodier's great work on *Le Vin de Bourgogne* tells the story) who always drank his burgundies in a glass cheese-bell. For it is the Burgundian theory that wine should be drunk in a vessel large enough to admit both mouth and nose simultaneously. "*Ce n'est évidemment pas très élégant, mais une nouvelle série d'odeurs perçues par les fosses nasales sera la bénéfice,*" says Camille Rodier. The glasses set out by the inn at Beaune are not quite as wide as cheese-bells, but very nearly. I now understand more clearly how it was that Mr. Hamish Miles three times began a letter to me, a year ago, when staying at Beaune; and three times desisted, over-come with sleep. He finished the letter a month later, in London. It was a powerful letter, and con-

cluded by quoting the wine card of the hotel, where you will find written: "*Ce n'est pas à dire que l'amateur de Bourgogne soit toujours un homme supérieur, mais c'est un être essentiellement perfectible. C'est un humaniste, sinon en substance, du moins en puissance, car on remarquera presque toujours chez lui un souci d'élégance dans l'expression de la pensée, un amour des bonnes lettres, de l'éloquence ou des arts.*"

Yet it was not of wine that I intended to write, but of an old house in Burgundy; an old house lying in that valley just west of the Côte d'Or hills, deep-set in such peaceable calm as only an inland valley can give. I should really call it a château, for such it is; but to the usual American connotation that word is too likely to suggest a place fantastically ornate. I would not mar its perfect sober dignity by a misleading word.

It is curious how hard it is in words to convey the simple serenity of that old house, with its cone-topped towers duplicated in the broad still moat. Nervous and apprehensive as we are, there is something guilty in the way we shrink from describing peace. Dignity and serenity are the words, perhaps. In that roomy building of stone floors and great oaken beams life seems to shine as clear, as rich, as strong, as colour through stained glass or through the dark wines of Aloxe and Savigny that ripen in its cellar. In every plain doorway, in every

curve of stone stair or twist of ironwork or slope of mossed tile roof, there is the sense of long tranquillity, decent and friendly and kind. But there is something happier there than mere tranquillity; a feeling of renaissance, of convalescence, as of an old loveliness that had fallen into misery and decay, and now finds itself in hands that can support and reënliven it. At the back of the fireplaces, when the blaze is going, you can see the emblem of former seigneurs: a right hand, lifted open, palm outward. A Glad Hand, we can call it, emblem of a beautiful name, Suremain de Saiserey, which sounds as though it meant something like A Sure Hand to Hold. But the surest hand may relax when there are no heirs to carry on.

Sometimes Americans seem the appointed lovers and custodians of European secrets: there was some strange blessing at work when (armed only with a postcard photo from which the name had been cut off) my friend the Caliph ferreted out this old house—which the owners were prepared to sell piecemeal and where poultry was kept in cages on the big stone stair. Looking across the moat on moonlit evenings, where the shadow of thirteenth century towers lay black-pointed on the meadow, there was no sound except the splash of wakeful carp. Sitting by candlelight to study eighteenth century vellum-bound account books (there was a cowhide trunk full of old records of the house) or

hunting up the story of the romantic young poet who loved the château and ran away from home to fight for Poland and died young; or admiring the portrait of the Duchesse de Foix, in a scarlet gown and green-gold mantle, gaily holding a tiny black mask, one knew the old house to be very much alive.

Who shall explain what miracle it is that happens when a man finds just that angle of earth that smiles particularly for him? In the Caliph's face as he ponders the stone facets of his moat-balustrade, or the hipped gables of his farm buildings, or the curved steps that lead down to his bowling green, or the arch of his alley of lime trees, I see the look of a man at peace with life. Architect by profession, his two or three months a year in this Burgundian retreat are certainly no mere vacancy, but a devotion to the bottom principles and honours of his art; from which he takes back, to his office in an American city, freshened notions of that marriage of Place and Time that we call architecture. And what delightful ironies in the situation, he chuckles. Is it not amusing, he says, that a Scotch-American Presbyterian, brought up to believe (almost) that Papists have horns and hoofs, finds himself seigneur of a Catholic hamlet, with a chapel in his own grounds and a village church under his windows where he must provide for sixty-some masses a year to be performed for

his house's ancestors? How is it, he asks, that he feels more at home here than anywhere else in the world—here where he doesn't even understand their language? Like the wise man he is, he says very little to casual acquaintances at home about the house where the welcoming hand shines on the chimneyback. Evasive magic comes to pass when a man's heart takes root, for a few months a year, in a life that is strangely different from his own and yet also strangely blended. It is no mean lesson to have lived, even for a week only, in that old house. One brings away more than memories of licheny stonework rising from a clear mirror of water: a sense that the art of living has sometimes triumphed (and can again) over muddle and distraction; that (as the humorous wine card has it) a lover of these things might even be "an essentially perfectible being." It will be pleasant for the Caliph to think sometimes, in the subway, that a cask of Corton 1919 (the same that we sampled, from a silver tasting-cup, in the dark vaults under a Côte d'Or hillside) is ripening all the long winter months in the cellar beneath the château. He carries the meaning and destiny of that old house deep settled in his mind, like a bottle of good wine.

II

The little river Serein (so I learn from Mr. H. Warner Allen's book *The Wines of France*) di-

vides the vineyards of Chablis, so that the vintages of that region are classified according to whether they ferment on the right or the left bank. It is the same stream which in its infancy makes a clear ring round this old château, on its way toward the Yonne and the Seine.

It is the Serein that idles gently at the foot of this thirteenth century stone tower, where a fire burns behind me, lighting up the open hand cast in the iron chimneyback. Suremain de Flammerans was the name of one of the old seigneurs, and his emblem still shines hospitably behind the flames. This queer old painted room, within walls five feet thick, has been unoccupied for generations. We have sounded all the panellings for secret slides—not successfully, alas; though the house has its mysteries, as you shall see. A room with a stone floor, by the way, is ideal as a study; you can throw your matches and ashes where you please, and brush them into the hearth afterward.

The little Serein, moving softly in its stony moat, is one of this place's most perfect charms. The wind stirs it in parallel scribbles that move round the walls as softly as unwritten lines of verse drift in a poet's mind. Loitering on the bridge, in a forenoon of Meursault-coloured sunlight, I heard Luther Conradi playing in the music room. The rippling notes came trembling out into the sweet September air: a glorious cascade of trebles, gay

and hasty with a downward-running cadence. At once the melody made me think of a little stream slipping and bending on its way; I imagined the Serein and its contributors tinkling down from Burgundian hillsides; and when I asked Conradi what it was, he said Liszt's *Au Bord d'une Source*. A few nights before, he had been playing this composition before going to bed. He woke just before dawn and heard someone in the music room (next his chamber) playing it again. He sat up in bed amazed at the charm and sureness of touch; and then, to his astonishment, the music rippled on to a new and singularly beautiful ending, different from the composer's. In the spell of half-sleep he thought it must be a dream, and lay down again. But the next morning two others, sleeping at opposite ends of the house, said they had heard music during the night. I have heard him play that new ending of the piece as he heard it in the darkness; it is quite different from Liszt's and not less beautiful. It has a curious upward striving, as though the rivulet were trying to flow backward to its unvexed origin.

It is the little Serein, bending round the château, that seems the *motif* of whatever secret music lingers here in unmeasurable vibrations of air. The circle of water binds it in, sets it delicately apart, isolates it with such careful artifice. A tiny stream, so easily crossed: it is really but a few feet of water

but its reflections are so deep! It is a great artist, the Serein: it knows that the way to savour a great silence is to have just a little sound; so at night, through open windows, you can hear it whispering past its overflow; on its way, past meadows and white cattle, toward larger destinies. Here it is like the daily mind of man—shallow itself, but it can mirror the pictures of great things.

Silence is a great part of the life the Serein here encloses. A peacefulness so profound that one wants to retard every slow moment and see it from both sides. Within and without, an old domain like this is a work of art, an art so deeply established that it collaborates with the supreme artfulness of Nature. Nature has the vague impulse, the push; man merely provides the rhyme-scheme, the ABBA. In the oddest variety everything here suggests artistic parables. On a sunny morning the shadow of this tower falls definite and dark across the brown moat. The carp, in a thick cluster, shoal to and fro exactly along the line of that shadow, keeping to the darker side. Is that not art? When the church bell rings, or a clock strikes, it seems always to fall upon the ear exactly at the right moment, at the instant when the apprehensions needed it. The wine stacked in bins in the cellar, to lie there cool and obscure, for years to come—the act of placing it has a ritual gravity. And brought upstairs in its little basket, like a baby in

a bassinette, carefully horizontal, a bottle of Musigny or Corton-Grancey has the full righteousness of colour, bouquet, and *goût* that make it as perfect in its own realm as an ode by Keats. There is no tariff in these matters. Perfection costs whatever you have to pay for it. Indeed the exhalation rising from a wine like Musigny, the ghost of the grape rising in the clear half-empty crater of those vast goblets, is so divine that it would seem the supreme act of connoisseurship simply to relish it in the nostrils and never taste it at all. Nor is it wise to taste rich Burgundies too continuously; the Subscriber in Waterbury who reproached me for an interest in such matters may console himself with the linguistic reflection that *goût* is easily transformed into gout.

I think I had forgotten to tell you about Burgundian clocks, which are amusing. The nearer one gets to Switzerland, I have always observed, the more people are interested in clocks. Perhaps that is because the Swiss, placed by Nature so near eternity, find earthly divisions of Time all the more precious. America invented the alarm clock, which rouses man to his work, and the time clock which keeps him at it. The Burgundian, taking it for granted that a solid citizen is for a large part of his time engrossed in the distractions of the table, conceived the idea of a clock that would strike the hour twice, to make sure of your noticing it

correctly. The first time, while you are toping or gossiping, the clock strikes at random, anything at all, perhaps exactly, perhaps not. But then, a couple of minutes later, when your attention has been called to the fact that another hour has ticked, the number is correctly clanged. Such is a Burgundian clock.

But the thought that the Serein and I were pursuing was that everything here seems (as a printer would say) *justified:* aligned and accurately imposed upon some underlying norm. When Conradi was playing the other evening, I sat near to watch his hands: it seemed impossible that they should err. The musician playing a difficult composition, he said, is always singing it in his mind. In the same way, in rare coalitions of circumstance, some subconscious spirit of just and fine living seems to be singing the complicated counterpoint of our existence. With it all, unless I misconceive the spirit of an old house, one is pervaded now and then by a delightful enchanted sadness. But the Serein has its gaieties too; and Conradi and I are meditating a Moating Song—a form of nautical ballad not yet achieved, I think.

Returning to France revives in the poet, who has not written verse for a longish time, an eagerness to put his notions in rhyme. In the train from Granville to Paris, and again from Paris toward Dijon, the measured charm of those countrysides,

the reddening orchards, white curly roads, neatly shaven plains and stripy hillsides, silver-gray hamlets and the blue curves of the Yonne and aisles of poplar trees, all seemed to suggest and require the old French forms of verse. In the ballade or rondeau the singer spreads his thoughts with the simple orderliness of a peasant sunning linen on a hedge.

And this evening we are going, quixotically, to tilt some Moulin-à-Vent. As one might write on a picture postcard: We are having an uncorking time.

A LETTER TO HENRY

CHESTERTON once said, my dear Henry, that though the British Empire had discovered almost everything else it had never discovered England. Perhaps indeed it is the Americans—some Americans—who are most likely to discover it: for we bring to it so healthy an appetite for just those viands that are the blood and gravy of English feeling. At home, often, our minds are stuffed rather than fed.

You begin to discover England when you get aboard the boat train at the Gare du Nord. Those voices: how adorably indescriptibly odd to the American ear! It is, seemingly, your own tongue, for (to your surprise, after months in France) you find you can understand the fragments you overhear; yet it is said in the most delicious lifting and softness of intonation. As different from our lingo as English grass from American grass. Then, when you go into the wagon restaurant for a cup of tea, you find that the French (with their divine and erring courtesy) have tried to make their guests at home. There are little pots of marmalade on the

tables, and platters of what the Company of Wagon-Lits fondly believes to be toast. And even slices of "plum cake." The other day in Paris a pink-cheeked little English flapper sat next to Titania and me at Smith's tea-room, over the bookshop, Rue de Rivoli, and had a thoroughly girlish snack: ice-cream with buttered toast. Then she called for "A slice of plum cake," and I knew that England wasn't far away. The fields of the Somme were won, not on the playgrounds of Eton, but in the tea-rooms of J. Lyons. You've heard of British Lyons. I can't quite make you understand why that pretty child (her name, I think, was Kathleen) asking for "plum cake" was to me a whole essay on European history.

On the deck of the cross-channel steamer *Riviera*, Boulogne to Folkestone. Is there anything more exciting than seeing, from mid-stream, a dark wet night, the lights of France and England simultaneously? All those lighthouses twinkling away like drugstores on both sides of a wide street. France seems to have the best of it: the light at Gris-Nez is brightest of all. "Do you know, sir," said the charmingly polite English passport officer, questioning me in the smokeroom, "you're positively the first American I've ever met without a middle initial." Only the non-British have to be passported on the boat: there were a few French, several Americans, and a little Jap giggling to

everyone with almost hysterical friendliness. The Englishmen were mostly at the bar, ordering "a small Bass."

What a day, my ancient! At 5:30 of a cold rainy morning, coffee on the far western coast of Normandy. At midday, filet of sole and a bottle of Aloxe-Corton with the Caliph at Marguery's in Paris. Passing through Amiens and Abbéville, that dark devastation which the Wagon-Lits stewards deem tea. In the second-class compartment from Folkestone to Victoria, "a small Bass," while I read in an evening paper, with shame, an American playwright's article explaining why he thinks that a million people should see his play, just opened in London. I had Proust's "Les Plaisirs et les Jours" in my pocket, but I can't read real things while travelling in unfamiliar scenes. I am too nervously and miserably happy. At Victoria I was met by a young kinsman who insisted on coffee and liqueurs. Then the 11:30 train to the moist and fragrant darkness of Surrey. Arriving at Effingham, opposite the Plough Inn there is a little old cottage buried among hollyhocks and cabbages. Lovelace once lived there, they tell me. Beer and books were waiting. How does one sleep, at 1:30 A. M., after a day like that? But I found there the latest issue of the *Saturday Review*, and took it to bed, by candlelight, in a tiny cupboard-bedroom where you lie with your feet almost out

of the little leaded window. I was just dozing off when I found that your compositor had turned my "inenarrably" into "inerrantly." This made me so peevish it woke me up again. I had to turn to the editorial, dealing, as usual, with the Future of American Literature.

When I woke up, the soft September drizzle was pearling the hollyhocks and cabbages. It's lucky, by the way, that Yorkshire pudding doesn't grow on a bush: one would be given it at every meal. But this was my first morning in England for eleven years, my Henry; and I was going to have bacon and tea. I often wondered why Edna Ferber went out of her way to poop off at English bacon in "So Big." I don't think she knows what she's talking about. Another matter that pleased me, I meant to mention it before, I was reading David Garnett's *Man in the Zoo* in bed in the hotel in Cherbourg, last June, when I found him mentioning "Cooper's Oxford Marmalade." I knew then that it was a good book. Garnett and the Bowling Green, I think, are the only two attempts to get Cooper's Marmalade into literature.

A little later I was in a taxi, on my way to Cavendish Square. I passed some park or other—let's say it was St. James's: I haven't yet recovered my London geography—and something hit me, so hard that I felt ill in my bowels. It was my love for London. I know that good manners impel one

to apologize for loving things. What I'm getting at, old magistrate, is this: don't worry too much about the Future of American Literature. It will come along all right, as any kind of art comes along, when we love things enough. Which doesn't mean blurbing about them, but trying to enter into their secret perils and meanings. And as that dear man H. M. Tomlinson says, when you talk to him about these matters and his face lights up vaguely and he murmurs the rich prose of his mind in a soft crooning whisper, "My God," he says, "you've had Whitman and Melville and Thoreau and Emily Dickinson. Isn't that enough for a century or so?"

When we love things with the terrible shuddering love of Emily Dickinson for her Amherst garden, for instance, literature happens—or else silence. There are a lot of dangerously smart people turning out the New Palaver on our side, with tongue in both cheeks at once. George Gissing would say that we haven't starved enough. I should say we haven't yearned quite enough.

But London, I repeat (you must allow a little lunacy to one coming back after eleven wild years) makes me wamble with love and terror. Paris, divine though she is, seems to fade out and grow dim. Is it because London is so much less eloquent that she seems to have much more to say? That is literally it; and it is the unsaid things that concern

literature. You know the type of Englishman who means most to our hearts: the man with whom it is difficult to communicate, but easy to commune.

And one of the loveliest things about London is, she brings me so much nearer to New York—the only city where I find my own dangerous peace. My heart is blithe to think of our polyglot skyline of insanity. And with all our sins, we have never quite been complacent about her, as some of our friends here are complacent about the London we love as much as they.

All this, you see, has been for me not discovery but verification. It is strangely mixed up with thoughts of a man who really did discover England, and as I came through Kent in the dark I thought how much poorer England is since he sailed. Of course, I mean Conrad. It is strange to think of the incredible wealth of that mind, its memories and brooded insights upon men, its nobly just division of love and scorn, its lonely affectionate simpleness, lost to us for always. Even his gravestone, they tell me, carries his Polish name. When the English think about Conrad, it will make them very generous toward "foreigners"—even to Americans, who have not the charm of real foreigners. But they are already more generous to us than we deserve.

I was passing by the Museum Tavern—opposite the British Museum—just as they unbarred the

door for the noon opening (it is Sunday). I went in, and drinking a tall one of shandygaff and admiring a pink section of ham and a vast slab of cheese (there's something rather good about ham in Amy Lowell's poem about England) which would have done you good to consider, I pondered how to write to you as you deserve. Don't let the too-easy critics wear out their fingers pointing to the scenery, as the excellent phrase is. Literature comes where and when you're not looking for it. Some day, just as some strange shabby bird is passing by, the pub door of Helicon will be unbarred and a Ganymede in shirtsleeves with foam on his moustache will beckon him in.

A MAP OF LONDON

I

I'VE just been looking at the map, my precious old map of London which I bought a fine, dark, drizzling evening in November, 1910, at a little shop in Praed Street, near Paddington Station. It's not likely that I shall forget that evening: it was my first foray into London on my own, and perhaps it was all the more cherishable because the liberty was only momentary: for I had to catch the 9:50 back to Oxford—the famous train (if I remember accurately) which was the latest one could take to be back in college before midnight. (Doesn't one still hear those Oxford hansoms jingling through the dark, clashing round the narrow angles of New College Lane?) So I can plainly see Praed Street in foggy darkness, shop windows bright with invitation, and a gigantic commissionaire in uniform outside the door of some music hall or vaudeville theatre (or could it have been a movie?). And all these intervening years my map, stoutly backed with muslin and with an ingenious mensurated tape for finding any desired street by

an index-number, has been waiting on the bookshelf. It was the first thing I put into my trunk when I came abroad last spring. What fun I would have (I promised myself) re-exploring the scenes of youthful wanders. And then (how delightfully ironical is plain fact) when I actually found myself in London I never had time to open it—except once, hastily, to verify the exact topography of that central trapezoid which is the nub of visitor's London. Oxford Street, Regent Street, Haymarket, Kingsway, and Strand—X'd, like a pair of firemen's suspenders, by Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road.

And now, London being again nothing but a dream, I get out the map and mumble a bit to myself over the places I meant to look at and didn't. I find that I can't even remember the meanings of marks I put on it fourteen years ago. I find a black circle round St. Stephen's Square, Bayswater: I savvy that all right, that's where Elmer Keith and I had lodgings at Christmas, 1910, so cold that we slept in swathes of the *Times* (with the *Literary Supplement* as foot-warmers). And I know what this mark means on Guilford Street, W. C., the most momentous address of my life. But what is this carefully inked blob on Lansdowne Crescent? Did anything exciting happen to me there? I haven't the faintest recollection of it.

What I really got out the map for was to see

exactly where is Bessborough Gardens. which I meant to visit and didn't. In *A Personal Record*, I think, Conrad told us that it was there, in lodgings, that his career as a writer began, while he was waiting for the landlady's daughter to clear away the breakfast tray. And I can understand the scene perfectly: for it is after breakfast in London lodgings, after tea and bacon and toast, to be precise, when you are lighting your pipe and warming the slack of your breeks at a minuscule warmth of coals, that one can feel most easily the flowing movement of mind that presages authorship. I hunt out Bessborough Gardens on the map and find it only a little way from the Tate Gallery (where Epstein's bust of Conrad now is) just above Vauxhall Bridge. It is an offshoot of Lupus Street, just the place where a man might begin writing to keep the wolf from the door. Why didn't I have time to see Lupus Street?

Yet, certainly I am not going to brood upon things I didn't reach, when I saw so much more than I deserved or expected. I wish I could remember the name of the genial old hotel (was it in the Commercial Road? or perhaps nearer Aldgate?) that H. M. Tomlinson pointed out to me as a traditional resort of sea-captains. For my own part, I discovered what is not too common in Europe, a comfortable little hotel with not a single American in it but myself, nor did I even see the names

of any in the register. There was a parson there with gaiters and an apron: he may even have been a Bishop ("solemnly pursuing his bird," if you remember your *Trivia*) or he may have been, like the ecclesiast in Elizabeth's *In the Mountains*, someone who expected soon to be a Bishop ("*Il n'est pas un évêque mais il est presque un*"). When he entered the breakfast room and ordered haddock and grilled kidneys and bacon, and unfolded his *Times* (naturally a solemnifying rite, as it is the Deaths and Marriages that one sees first; and you can't get to be a Bishop without knowing all sorts of people who are likely to be dead) the scene was as English as Runnymede. For England is different from other countries in that it really *is* exactly as it has been described. I have only one fraud to report, and that is the "mahogany tree" that Thackeray wrote about—the table in the *Punch* office where the thirteen lucky editors sit down for their weekly staff dinner. The board was already laid, with plenty of wine glasses, when I was there, but Ewan Agnew lifted the cloth—and it isn't mahogany at all, but a fine old slab of soft deal. If it had been mahogany probably they wouldn't all have carved their initials in it. W. M. T. and E. V. L. are the best carved monograms in the lot. Mark Twain, I believe, remains the only visitor who has dined with the staff: I wonder if they asked him to cut his initials in the board?

Certainly he would have enjoyed doing so. Or perhaps he would have said that two thirds of Thackeray's would be enough for him.

The pubs, as you probably know, shut down at 10:30 in the evening: one wonders what Dr. Johnson would have thought of being ejected from the Cheshire Cheese at that hour? Along Fleet Street one sees none of the all-night lunchrooms that cheer the heart of the late journalist in American cities. The only recourse at that hour is to climb the stairs to a newspaper office where a certain editor sits at his desk eager for colloquy. His stuff has all been put on the wire, but he stays till two o'clock or so in case anything should "break." He has comfortable chairs and he gets out the bottle of Scotch. Then, if there are congenial listeners, you may hear him unfold some of the richness of his alert experience. Robert W. Service happened to be in the other armchair the night I heard the story of the cat. I don't identify the editor himself, for it is his pride that in his twenty years on a famous paper his name has only been printed twice, and then by accident.

He came down from Scotland as a youngster, to look for a newspaper job. He tapped at all the doors and found no entry. His small fund of money soon ran out, and he felt himself beaten. There seemed no room for him on Fleet Street, and one night he wrote home asking for money enough to

get back to Scotland. He went to the post office to buy a stamp for the fatal letter. On the counter sat a big black cat, comfortably licking her fur. In an idle moment the young man held out the stamp to see if the cat would moisten it for him. She did so, seeming to relish the sweet taste of the gum. He affixed the stamp and was about to drop the letter down the slit——

Then he put the letter back in his pocket, ran to a desk in the corner and then and there wrote a brief story about the Stamp-Licking Cat at the Fleet Street Post Office. How the postal authorities, always solicitous of the public convenience, had laboriously trained the animal to sit on the counter and lick stamps for customers. How the cat was specially nourished with a saliva-stimulating diet, and that a project was under way to mingle a little oil of catnip with the government's stamp-gum. And so on.

The first newspaper editor to whom he offered this agreeably preposterous little yarn accepted it with glee. It was the journalistic *coup* of the week. Illustrated papers wired for photos, and the Post Office was crowded with people asking to see the cat. The S. P. C. A. hurried round to see if it was a matter within their jurisdiction. The sale of stamps at that office increased forty per cent. And the author of the story has never since been without a job. It is the story of Dick Whittington over

again, you see. I told you, didn't I, that England is all a kind of fairy tale. It is a different cat that my friend has now in his rooms in the Temple; but also perhaps one with magical powers. For when a Zeppelin dropped a bomb in the neighbouring quadrangle . . . it didn't explode.

The most unconscious pathos that I saw in London was a sign in an Oxford Street clothing shop. RAINCOATS FOR THE HOLIDAYS. (This, remember, was in summer.) And the most eloquent word was the name of the Air Ministry's building in Kingsway—ADASTRAL HOUSE. Which reminds me again of the journalist mentioned above. When the new Bush Building—a terrific loftiness by London standards—was put up at the foot of Kingsway, there was talk of building some living apartments on the roof, and renting them. Our Scot suggested an advertisement to lure possible tenants. "Yes," he said, quoting Stevenson—"Bed in the Bush with stars to see."

II

The American's first instinct is that a lively thunder-storm can't be far away. The spires of Wren point strangely pale among the dark jumble of the City, not unlike the white steeples of New England against a coming squall. That soft lilac light, diluted fuscous sunshine (it lies like honey in tranquil Bloomsbury squares) and shadows in a

hundred blends and tints, surely they are some barometric omen. He almost pauses to listen, among the steady drum of traffic, for muted jars of thunder. But the air is light and fresh; fragrant, even in October, with almost April sweetness. In the bronzing squares it is a tender country whiff, though spiced always with that faint sharpness of London soot. London smoke, a gladness in the nostril, richest of all fumes to a cognoscenting nose. I recommend the great train-shed of Liverpool Street station at dusk as the perfect place to watch afternoon and evening plight their troth, with Smoke as the officiating spirit. Very sensibly did London choose scarlet as the colour for anything official—uniforms, post-office vans, pillar-boxes. One of our dark green letter boxes would be invisible across a London street. "Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold! Bring me my Chariot of Fire!" cried William Blake. (We heard the organ at Canterbury Cathedral playing Parry's music for those stanzas the other afternoon—not among the "dark Satanic mills" but in the very heart of "England's green and pleasant land." It was good to hear Blake's great madman's voice exulting in the misty close.) The Chariot of Fire, along a twilight street, is a post-office van.

A man who has only a few days in London would be very silly to spend much of his time writing about it. Better, for the moment, just to let the

mind touch glancingly upon a few visions that seemed, somehow, of an essence. Getting off the channel-steamer at Dover, there was the engine *Sir Bors de Ganis* waiting to take the boat train to Victoria. Somehow a locomotive so named seemed adequate compensation for not having been able to see the chalk cliffs (the fog was too thick). And the train passed through Tonbridge, where I discerned two stations; one called Tonbridge Tub's Hill, the other Tonbridge Bat and Ball. It seemed a just entry into the land that invented sport.

Our first lunch was at Simpson's, off Cheapside, in the famous old Ordinary where the management tries to divert your mind from the amount of fish and eels you have eaten by offering a free meal if you guess the measurements of the cheese. England is surely the only country where fish is eaten three meals a day and again at supper after the theatre. Some enthusiasts even sally out at five o'clock to have a fried fish with their tea. A good deal of cockney wooing is done over platters of fish: the time, the plaice and the loved one all together. The statue of Britannia should wear a fillet of fish. Another gastronomy quite new to me was lower-case potatoes served in the soup. It was at a dinner where Sir James Barrie was at the board, and the host averred that Barrie had been brought up on potatoes in his soup. We all fell to heartily, hoping that the combination might have

the same nimbling effect upon our own wits. Then, when the champagne was poured, a wag across the table begged for a potato in his glass. "I was brought up on it," he insisted. Perhaps (it just occurs to me) there is some meaning in the fact that the two greatest essayists England has had were named for food; and the third is half named for drink. All this took place in a room so lined with portraits by Hogarth that occasionally one lifted one's eyes from the table to remember that the painting of (was it?) the Woffington, "dallying and dangerous," was the one that Lamb had described.

The pearly haze that dreams over St. Paul's—the giant gooseberry as James Bone calls it, with the irreverence of a true lover, in his beautiful book *The London Perambulator*—is at least partly the steam of Sausages and Mashed rising from a thousand little taverns approached through narrow passages. There poets sit among barrels meditating their staves. At a few specially favoured places you can precede your sausage with a sublimation of Spain, which cork forests are grown to honour. The most teetotal of wives would hardly reproach her husband if he said he had lunched on Bristol Milk. It is the noblest of sherries. In the Fleet Street aroma there is also, when the breeze sets from Southwark, a rich gust of hops from the warehouses across the river. A bless-

ing on the hop factors; it is their custom that has kept thriving unmarred one of the very last of the old coaching inns, the George in Southwark, only a few steps from the site of Harry Bailly's Tabard. There, in the words of an eighteenth century bill still framed in the hostess's bar-parlour, customers will find "Beds, wines, spirits and stabling to their perfect satisfaction." The galleries of the inn overlook the yard just as they did when theatrical managers got their first notion from that sort of thing. The site of the Globe playhouse is near by, now built upon by the Barclay and Perkins brewery (a worthy successor; it was that brewery in whose affairs Dr. Johnson was, momentarily, an adviser; his head is still on their bottle-caps). And the Beargarden still runs down toward Bankside. The Three Hours for Lunch Club has established friendly relations with the George of Southwark; and that noble place has already its American reciprocities. Hopkinson Smith did a charming drawing of the coffee room and gave it to Miss Murray, the proprietress; it hangs there, watching the hop merchants playing dominoes after lunch; and on a table in the coffee room I found a much-thumbed copy of O. Henry's *Strictly Business*. This was surely a surprise. I pointed it out to H. M. T., who was with us. "O. Henry just about saved some of our lives in the war," he said.

It is amusing to find a tiny Temperance Hotel

bravely sandwiched in among the hop-warehouses. And the Club would be remiss if it didn't mention the Riverside Tea Rooms at 49 Bankside, which look cosily out over barges and cranes onto what must be almost the oldest and best view of London, with St. Paul's exactly opposite. It was pleasant to an American eye to find in low-lying Brixton, not far from Little Dorrit's church, the sign *Altitude, Ltd., Steeplejacks*. This was noted on the way to C. Morley and Co., wine merchants. Mr. Morley was unfortunately absent, but his affairs were increased by four bottles of moderate port, purchased on the understanding that his first name, as I saw it last year in the telephone book, is Christopher. His assistant believes it to be Charles, but I am still hoping.

Since we've crossed the river to the beginning of the Canterbury trail we may as well go further. Canterbury, of course, is a Pilgrimage; and a pilgrimage is a journey made to some meaning that one feels is greater than one's self. There is a grave in the corner of a quiet, very fragrant ground in Canterbury, where yellow roses are still blooming in October. And there are two people to whom red carnations have a special meaning in London. One of these carnations, worn that day by chance, but crumpled after a long journey, was still in Titania's coat pocket. "Rest after toyle, port after stormy seas," we read on the stone; then, as we

turned away, I saw her secretly take the flattened little sweetness from her pocket and put it among the many lovelier flowers on the grave.

James Bone, in that very remarkable book about London, the piety of twenty years' close watching and fine imagining, tells the story of a Cockney in Canada who enlisted for the war. In making out his paper he wrote simply *London* as his birthplace, "London?" said the recruiting officer. "Which London? London, Ontario?" "London, Ontario!" cried the outraged exile. "London, the whole bloody world!"

Yes, that's what it is. To the New Yorker its altitude seems limited; but like the potatoes in Barrie's soup, our hearts were brought up on it long before we were born.

L'HOMME QUI RIT

I HAD felt for a long time that it might happen; now it has. But first I must tell you how time and feeling led up to it. Life is always leading up to things; then—as in this case—you find yourself unprepared, and behave disgracefully.

It is the calm, suspended expectancy of autumn that has something to do with it. Over these coasts there now lingers the yellow quiet of October: as you bicycle softly through villages you smell cider on the air—the air that is so curiously mingled: it feels warm and smells cold; and sliding round a dropping bend you suddenly drift into a whole pool of moist chill. Red and yellow apples are piled in the fields; the eyes of donkeys are more wistful than ever; your wheels pass over little prickly mats of flattened chestnut burs—just as they used to in the woods round Haverford, twenty-five years ago, before our chestnut trees all died. Perhaps good American chestnuts, when they die, go to France?

The season of *bains de mer* ended in mid-September, all the visitors are gone, the little town

has settled down—after a disastrously wet season —to the long pull through the winter: you see the tradesmen apprehensively getting ready to live on one another. Old Julie, our tumultuous factotum, will shortly go back to her normal life as a fishwife. I wondered why she was so eager to have the Microcosm's baby carriage when we leave. Now the truth is out: she says it will be fine to sell fish in, *pour gagner ma petite vie pendant l'hiver.* But she must be careful to balance the fish in it just right, as we had to the baby, because it's one of those French prams that shut up suddenly into a kind of sandwich.

It's this drowsed and apprehensive sweetness of October that the *bainsdemerists* miss by going back to Paris so early. Perhaps some day you'll go along the hidden leafy road from Donville to Mme. Lebrun-Hecquard's inn A la Rivière at Coudeville; where you can sit at a small yellow table under the passion flower—that strangely Freudian plant —and have whatever *consommation* you prefer. After your port wine (which the French drink *before* dinner, as a kind of cocktail, and very sensible, too), Madame having lit the fire in the little sitting room, you can tackle chicken *en cocotte* bathed in a noble gravy, and an omelet that has somehow inherited just a faint tingle of onion: nothing so gross as the pearly bulb itself but the misted maiden tears of a young female onion in distress. It was

there, with a bottle of *vin d'Anjou*, that we sat with a poet and his wife and after deploring the lack of reticence in the passion flower, fell upon a discussion of the private life of the Russian aristocracy. We knew a good deal about this, as one of us had employed a governess who had once worked for a Russian grandee: we concluded (about the time the *vin d'Anjou* was finished) that the Russian nobility had led the lives of passion flowers; but that the real reason for their goings-on was that they were a hot-climate race compelled to live in a cold country, and that this had made them mad.

It was when I went back to Madame Hecquard's, some time later, to retrieve my walking stick which I had left there that evening, also a notebook full of memoranda about some phantoms in a book that doesn't get written very fast, that I specially remarked this October vacancy and air of attendance. It is a sober landscape: no flame colours as at home, just a gentle subsidence into pale brown and saffron. But the violets are still in flower, and roses, and big cider casks, stoppered with a twist of straw, creak along the way. Or on these clear nights, on the grass-topped cliffs over the sea, the world is so still that one thinks one might almost arrive at some conclusion and yet turns uneasily away from that lucid sky because of its exquisite lack of meaning. A candy-peel slice

of moon drifts down toward the rocks of Chausey, there is the heavy rattling crumble of high tide on the stony strip of upper beach, a mild air with strong grassy sweetness. How (one wonders) did we happen upon this one stretch of uplifted lonely pasture, spread superstitious above sea and bare to the night—just the field that one's mind required? Some day—and as an honorary member of the *Syndicat d'Initiative* of Donville-les-Bains I suppose I should relish the idea—some day people will build upon that field and even imagine they own it: but some of it will be mine, and I and my phantoms will walk there unawares.

Now I am beginning to approach the matter. The soft and ripened solemnities of autumn, the long serenity of lonely sands, these tickled by the jovial absurdities of bilingual ménage, all had long put me in dangerous disequilibrium. That afternoon, it appears, Julie had groaned more than usual. These groans—which are not the expression of any undue torsion of withers, but a combined whistle, sigh, grunt, pant, and hallelujah, accompanied by a roaring sneeze and a gargling of the glottis, are Julie's way of letting the household know that she is on the job. For, if by hazard as much as fifteen minutes have passed without Julie's having an opportunity to talk to someone, she begins to be doubtful of her own existence: she needs reassurance.

I asked the Urchin—who finds Julie a phenomenon as amazingly fascinating as a rainbow or a French locomotive—what Julie was groaning so much about. That's not groaning, he said, she's saying her prayers. I said that I did not think those emanations were exactly prayers, they seemed to me too vehement. Oh, yes, they are her prayers, he insisted; she always says something about Jesus after each one.

—You don't know nearly all the funny things that go on in this house, he said presently.

—I'm glad I don't, I said sternly; I know quite enough; it's difficult not to laugh as it is.

—Julie, I said, you had better repose yourself a few moments and take a glass of wine.

—Monsieur, she replied, there isn't any more red wine. (I began to see why the specially rich wave-length of the groans.)

—Eh, well, Julie, take some of the white.

—Monsieur, the white wine takes me with strange drollery in the stomach.

A little later Julie returned to the matter of the small enamel coffee-pot which I bought for five francs and on which her heart is set.

—It is only six days from now, Monsieur, that you will call for your good little coffee and there will be no Julie to bring it all hot.

—Julie, I reply, you are managing my weaknesses; I implore you not to agitate me.

—You will think then, Monsieur, in America, of that poor maiden who will be under the earth for all you know, the poor maiden to whom you gave this jolly small coffee-pot as a souvenir.

—But, Julie, if I give you that coffee-pot (the old rascal has had a carriage load of things given her already) what shall I have as a souvenir of *you?*

More groans in the kitchen, later. This is because Julie knows that to-night we are going over the proprietor's inventory, and the fact that she has broken eight out of the ten coffee-cups will presently be discussed.

She begs us not to put the new ones, just bought for replacement, "in circulation" before we go. "I have," she truly says, "a very maladroit hand with cups."

But it was at the dinner table that it happened.

—Julie, these sardines are very good. I've left some for you.

—Monsieur, I adore them. But I can't take any: they lie at the bottom of my stomach for three days.

I could see them lying there; but I got by this corner safely. Then, forgetting she was not in the kitchen, Julie let off another groan. The tiny *salle à manger* vibrated.

—Julie, you groan much this evening.

—Sir, it is my unhappy feet. I have no blemish

nowhere (she runs a patting hand over the superb rondures of her person) save in my feet. *Ils gonflent.*

It began to come. I couldn't help it. But she misunderstood my preliminary agitations.

Oui Monsieur, ils gonflent comme ça. And she seized the end of the bread-loaf to illustrate the size of those members when they *gonflent.*

It came. I laughed. I roared, I rocked, I cackled and wept and shook. The long restraint of months was broken, all Julie's adorable and maddening ways broke like surf on the pebbles of my mind, I caved in. I laughed . . . I laughed as a man laughs when he reads *L'Ile des Pingouins.* How long is it since I have laughed like that?—Not since the *Saturday Review* was founded.

CURE OF SOULS

I

"SAXONIA"

I SAT down one evening, in the smokeroom of the *Saxonia*, with a sandwich and a glass of toddy, to write in my diary. How pleasant it would be (I thought) to begin with the address 47° N, 36° W. But steamship smokerooms aren't what they were in the first chapter of *Captains Courageous*. (Did you ever wonder why the illustrator of that book drew a picture of an Atlantic liner steaming through a Grand Banks fog *with all her flags up?*) Just behind me a lady was talking about Henry James. In another corner a lady was winning a game of poker. On the thwartship settee more ladies, in shimmering gowns and long knee-crossed slopes of pale silk stocking, were listening partly to a garrulous gentleman who said he was writing a book about God and partly to another who was narrating how in Dayton, Ohio, the inscrutable brightness of Pelmanism shone round about him and strengthened him to put

over a big proposition upon a group of important customers. "A man will be what he wills to be," he concluded.

Born eavesdropper, I was not strong enough to occlude these agreeable distractions. Besides, I was merely jotting down, for my own pleasure, random attempts to define a work of art. "A work of art," I wrote, "is something composed in proportion; but which also reminds us of the uncomposable disproportion between the universe and the artist."—"A work of art" (I tried again) "is something which by the subtlety of its imperfection suggests the completeness we can never grasp." These absurdities, which gave me mild pleasure to consider, were probably the effect of reading Anatole France's delightful *Jardin d'Epicure;* for I am rational enough, in my proper senses, to know that a work of art needs no definition. If M. France had been in the smokeroom (I reflected) he would hardly have been idling over a solitary notebook and a hot Scotch. He would have been talking to the dark girl over there—the only one in the room whose voice was inaudible and stockings invisible. Or would he have been pondering the notice warning one against professional gamblers? How delightful an advertisement, I used to think: tantamount to warning us against the whole human race.

But the restless indolence of the sea was upon

me; even the bland, phosphorescent ironies of M. France were beginning to seem faintly sterile. I went to walk on deck: one of those long, vacant, hypnotic prowls that can only be taken, on shipboard, late at night. For during daytime there is a tacit agreement among passengers that no one must look at the sea. If you halt by the rail a moment to make friends with Space, someone is told off to Start a Conversation. Steamship companies, I believe, award promotion to their delightful pursers according to the number of social events—tennis tournaments, fancy-dress parties, dances, concerts—arranged to avert people's minds from that embarrassing reality, the Sea. The only time I actually saw a latitude crossing a longitude, in a star-shaped bubble of foam, I was called away to consider the problem of what ought to be done about taking up a collection for the orchestra. On the modern liner there is a deck for every amusement except thinking.

The beauty of the old *Saxonia* was that she isn't modern. How glad I was we had resisted a friend's temptation to come home in the *Berengaria*. The first moment we climbed into *Saxonia's* bowels, from the Cherbourg tender, wandering darkly through storerooms and holds and galleys and engine quarters until we reached the white cabin passages, I knew her for the honest old sweetheart she is, the kind of ship I used to cross in long ago,

the kind of ship I understand. When I took my bath, next morning, I immediately resumed my boyhood habit of putting my head under water, to hear the engines more plainly. Perhaps not even McAndrew knew that trick for tallying the magnificent throb of those great cranks. And *Saxonia's* engines are worth listening to and worth seeing: no turbine oil-burning business, but the real hell-raising, crashing rhythm of quadruple-expansion cylinders, and an old-fashioned stokehold next door—not manned by Gene O'Neill's symbolical apes, but by calm and apparently cheerful fellows.

The night I speak of, I strolled aft and looked in through the brass-circled ports of the lounge, where dancing was going on. The Chief had tossed care aside for the moment and was in his dress uniform, sidling about with sailorly gusto and ingeniously steering his partners against the swing of the ship. This was a brave sign; the night before, when she was dipping her nose into great green hills, kicking her bronze fins into thin water astern, the Chief's brow was dark. After years in turbines this was his first voyage in the old *Saxonia* and there was much to ponder. While you and I were topside, hanging on to something, enjoying the scream of the gale (that had passed through the regulation stages of *moderate*, *fresh*, *strong*, into *full*) and that thrilling fall and quavering shudder of a ship lifting her screws into mere

lather, the Chief was in dungarees paddling the bilges, watching the governor that automatically shuts down steam when she races, even crawling under boilers to see that they sat solid on their stools. For the Man Responsible takes few people's say-so in a new job. That was the kind of night when the upper deck of the big fast ships would have been unpleasant. But a solid old leisurely slows down to sixty-three revolutions, puts her snout creamily into it, and you don't even need the fiddles on the saloon tables.

Anything that is greatly loved, as an old ship is loved, deserves study and deserves open homage. There is a type of passenger who has been spoiled, by large cabins and running water and private baths, for the *Saxonia* sort of thing. But there are still some of us who like to know that we are aboard a ship, not a damned hotel; to whom the plain old companionways are a joy and every creak of see-saw corridors a deep music. As you lie in your narrow berth—"It's narrow, narrow make your bed and learn to lie your lane"—you study the honest pattern of bolts along the white girders overhead; you astonish to find how that cradling movement completes the whole meaning and sensation of life. So consoling, so lulling, such a perfection of curved restfulness, the creaking ease of a slow ship that takes her own time among big water seems to abolish the mind alto-

gether. "*C'est un grand débarras*," as M. France says.

The steamship companies, in their resolute desire to keep passengers amused, and the immense complexity of their business, have somewhat forgotten the essentially metaphysical nature of sea voyage. But the tradition lingers in an unexpected place—the purser's Routine Book. I am proud of having been allowed to study this great document from end to end: it lists everything that has to be done and thought of by the ship's business manager, and you will not wonder that pursers have to wear little rainbows of ribbon on their bosoms to keep up their courage. But the important thing is that in the Routine Book passengers are always referred to as "souls."

So, abandoning the irrelevancy of mind, it is as a soul you travel—in the eleven-day ships, at any rate. And you become aware of a greater soul too, that of the ship herself. Gazing entranced at the roaring flicker of her stout pistons, or privileged a moment to visit the bridge (not the glassed-in conservatory of the newer craft, but the old naked dog-trot, open from wing to wing), or palavering with the Lord of Below, you begin to realize how very dear to seafaring men themselves is this old vessel that has nearly run her course. Take her how you will, in the very shape

and feel of her there is an honourable loveliness that the grander sort almost miss by their sheer splendour. For the greatest ships of to-day are so marvellous that neither man nor ocean can quite live up to them: but in the *Saxonia* type both sides of the problem meet and unite in gracious content. That is why I do not hesitate to honour her by name, for ships need praise as women do. They tell me that after her quarter century she will be withdrawn: that the ship-breakers are covetous of her stout mahogany and brass. But I keep thinking of Bill the Electrical Greaser, who has lived with her dynamos ever since she first went out, more than twenty-four years ago. Bill, who would certainly lose his way if he went topside (I don't suppose he ever saw her from above) has lived with her, as men live with women and ships, for twenty-four years. And when they take her off, what will Bill do then?

II

"CARONIA"

There must be some secret merit in the pure vacancy of a pellucid voyage like this; though one who loves to see a ship putting her nose into it may confess a private disappointment. This is now the eighth day of warm transparent weather and ball-room sea. The first night there was fog, and the

whistle hallooed steadily, that deep terrorizing groan rather like the voice of John Donne in a sermon. It is a fine romantic sound to hear—when nothing happens; though, after the Chief Officer's little afternoon lecture on boat-drill, you meditate, in your bunk (not yet knowing your stateroom by heart) the exact order in which you would move toward your wife's life-preserver, your trousers, and the little folder of American Express checks. But after that one vigil there was nothing to reef the merriment of our delightful skipper. His enchanting mirth was often heard; our only gales were those of laughter proceeding from the captain's table in the saloon. The laughter of sea-captains is a comforting sound in the ears of passengers. Long may Captain Hossack and his fine *Caronia* make such comely crossings. I suppose it is a weakness of mine to believe that every ship I travel in is loveliest of all; yet I don't see how any could be more gracious to my eye than this steady old lady. A perfect vessel, nobly planned. From the boot-hole to the brass expansion-plate (I wonder how many passengers noticed that, the thwartship suture that gives and takes when she pitches) I find her full of delights; and her cranks are just as impressive as my vanished *Saxonia's*. There can be nothing against her except that she's faster than I knew: she turns off her 420 to 430 a day, even when three quarters

of an hour have been lifted from the clock. I was a little disturbed by a sign saying that if any Rotarians on board would make themselves known, the Purser would try to arrange the weekly sacramental lunch; but the notice disappeared, so evidently there weren't any. I believe that *Caronia* must be almost the very last of the Older generation (she was built about 1905) for the smokeroom steward tried gallantly to obey orders and enforce the placard *The Smokeroom Is Reserved for Gentlemen:* but he soon gave up. What an agreeable smokeroom it is, too, with plain old panelling like a Georgian taproom and a real open fireplace—not a bed of cold glass nuggets with an electric light under 'em.

I knew a sea-captain who said he kept himself in good trim by walking round the boat-deck (in the old days it used to be called the "hurricane-deck," but there aren't hurricanes now as there were for wet little ships like the *Umbria* and *Etruria*, or the blessed old *Pennlands* and *Wæslands* and *Westernlands* and *Belgenlands* that sailed from Philadelphia in the windy nineties)—by walking round the boat-deck picking up, without bending his knees, the hairpins dropped by young women late at night. But even that calisthenic is impossible now that all the young women are shingled to the nape. It is the junior officer who gets the exercise, playing deck tennis

with the clinker-built young women; it is my observation that the engineers play a more cunning game than the men from the bridge. I wonder why that is?

Except for such pleasing interims as meals, masquerade dances, deck tennis, or cards, the merely passenger mind retires into a hypnotized serenity. It is with gazing fed; it gapes patiently over the stainless gulf and finds it as full of possibility and yet as empty of reply as a vast blue ink-bottle. Here, on this warm broad teak-wood rail, is the very attitude and home of meditation . . . but no meditations come. The only consideration that hovers in my mind, after a week of scrutiny, is that perhaps the universe itself does not think, but even implores others not to do so. With a curious kind of alarm I found myself recoiling from Keyserling's *Travel Diary of a Philosopher* which a generous publisher sent me for shipboard reading. It is exactly the kind of book I love, and on shore I shall devour it; but here, impossible. Just as I always need a few glasses of wine to unlimber my French, so the mind requires a few whiffs of the unease of earth to liberate its fatal and enjoyable reasonings. Here no literature but the merciful detective story, or the latest *Lunatic at Large* can enter in.

My nearest approach to literature has been Mr. A. Edward Newton's *The Greatest Book in the*

World, which I enjoyed as I enjoy all Mr. Newton's chattings; and when, to my great surprise, I found him saying "If I were sending a boy to college, I would choose Haverford," you may imagine that I believed Mr. Newton's book to be a worthy volume. I think that is only the second time, in the general literature of the world, that I have found that small and unpublicitied college mentioned. I was pleased. Speaking of Storer Clouston, a group of people were hot-Scotching in the smokeroom and more or less feeling their way into one another's tastes. Excellent progress was being made: there was a subtle suspicion that these were kinsprits. "Now," said one, "here is a very crucial question. Are you—I have a feeling that you are—Lunatic at Large kind of people?" Yes, a cunning question! For if they hadn't been they would merely have thought it an insult, and the matter would have ended. But with a scream of pleasure they cried "Indeed we are!" and all was well.

I think I must tell you of a great triumph, because it will never happen again. Smoking alone one evening I was accosted by a genial gentleman in the doll business. He told me a good deal about the increase in the American doll industry. "Did you know," I said, "that Great Britain has removed the tax on dolls' eyelashes?" This excited him enormously, as he had not known about it.

Well, I had read it in the latest issue of the *Manchester Guardian*, which reached me the morning I sailed. Nothing, after that, could dissuade him from believing that I too was a disguised magnum in the doll traffic. The information was evidently important to him, and cheered him vastly.

I don't agree with the Caliph Newton in all his delightfully crotchety musings; I think him worse than unfair to Matthew Arnold, for instance; but then you come upon so magnificent a thing as this—on Dickens—

"Of nature, in the ordinary acceptance of that word, he knew nothing, cared nothing. London was to him a vast field in which wild flowers grew, the children of the poor, and he gathered them by armfuls."

When I found that I laid down the book with a tingle, climbed out of the steamer-chair, and went to the lonely northward deck to think it over. Has any one lately written a finer sentence?

Now, in an hour or so, we'll be sighting Land's End, and you know that prospective thrill after a week of space. No longer that slow and thoughtless feeling of mere existence, that one has in a clear calm midnight when the masthead is steady against the grainy sky. The channel is opening her arms to us, the queer uneasiness returns, a whole Continent full of irregular verbs is waiting. And this morning when I went on deck I dis-

tinctly smelt England. For seven days we had the universe almost to ourselves. But even God, I think, was restless on the eighth day.

III

"TRANSYLVANIA"

Taking a bath at the Central Hotel, Glasgow, I had a feeling of being already at sea. For in a Glasgow bathroom you find yourself among the specially large and sturdy plumbing, deep enormous tubs and brass taps, so familiar to all travellers in the Clyde-built ships. To read the name of *Shanks and Co., Barrhead*, written in a bathtub, has always been part of the flavour of sea-adventure; how often, simmering deep in hot slanting brine, I have hummed small private madrigals in honour of Messrs. Shanks.

It would take a number of pages justly to describe the various excitements of making one's first passage from Glasgow. The journey from Euston, eight happy hours in what must be one of the world's most comfortable trains, would be a theme by itself. It was odd that of all the named engines on the London Midland and Scottish line, I saw (in the yards at Crewe) the one that would give me the most surprise—an engine called *Charles Lamb*. The express that leaves Euston at 10 A. M. is timed (in October, anyhow) so that

you get your glimpse of the Westmorland hills in the full shine of afternoon. Be sure to look out for the two pretty girls sitting on a stone bridge near Grayrigg; you pass them about 3:15. Then, after the very Long-Islandish country north of Carlisle, where just casually your eye catches little stations called Gretna and Lockerbie, you meet the first sunset shadows in the folds of Annandale. You'll not be wasting time drinking tea in the restaurant car; it's my guess you'll be standing in the corridor watching those lovely bare ridges, bronze as Roman helmets in honeyed light; sifted with opal in the rough ravines. And if you're a lover of differentials in language, the first thing you'll mark at the Central Station in Glasgow is the sign *Passengers Are Requested to Shew Their Tickets.*

Certainly philologists should always make the Glasgow passage; words that are strange and yet anciently familiar are like toys for you to play with all the way over. "Bute Hall," said one, showing me the Glasgow University by starlight. "Lord Bute?" I asked. "Aye, he gifted it." Going down to Greenock, where we boarded *Transylvania*, how pleasant to see the sign *Ground to Feu.* Speaking of calling us in the morning, "I'll just give you a chap on the door at 8 o'clock," said the steward. And the Chief Engineer, in one of those midday cracks after the Captain has sent word

from the bridge that "the sun's over the foreyard," was telling of fishing for octopus. It's not bad meat if you don't know what it is, was the gist of his comment; "but if ye know, ye kind o' grue at it." There is some lively etymology to be taken in at every turn. Walking on the boat-deck, under the three black funnels, where that fine soupy whiff comes up the galley ventilator and sharpens the appetite, I found a small faucet marked *Boats' Breakers*. Why, one might well ponder, is a lifeboat's water keg always called a *breaker?* The captain, who could outskeat many a college Ph. D. in his knowledge of words, told me why. It's really *barreca*, Spanish for a small cask. This pleased me, as I already knew the French *barrique*. There is no lingo so savoury as that of ships and charts. Even Cape Race, that ill-favoured coast which masters give a generous offing in foul weather, the Captain secretly relishes for being the tip of the Avalon Peninsula. Of the names on the Newfoundland chart I liked specially Random Sound: it seems to carry the indignant voice of perplexed old mariners. Pinchgut Tickle is another name I remember on that chart. It was Joseph Conrad, in a little essay called *Outside Literature*, who praised the kind of writing found in Notices to Mariners and other sea-memoranda of that sort, where a lack of precision in the text may mean life or death.

We were not less lucky than John Burroughs in our hap of weather. The Clyde, as he noted long ago in *Fresh Fields*, is the finest of all approaches to Britain; when we went down the firth on a transparent October afternoon it was at its best, reminding me of a grander Lake George. Glasgow has not been very skilful in letting the larger world know the magnificence of her noble waterway. We are all aware that she is a great shipbuilding city, but somehow we do not realize that she is approached by a winding strait among purple mountains that is surely among earth's finest picturesques. To an eye wonted to Long Island levels the fells and laws seem unexpectedly high and bluff. Goat Fell runs close upon 3000 feet; Ailsa Craig sheers up 1100 feet in one steep lump. As you glide so smoothly by the openings of a dozen lochs and sounds, each bending in among the unspoiled hills, or look over into the green apron of Ayrshire, it seems preposterous to leave this magic region barely glimpsed. I wonder if any other great manufacturing town has such fairylands at its door. By the time you have dropped the Mull of Kintyre, and Scotland fades, Rathlin Island (where the Bruce studied spiders) is in sight. It is too dark to see the Giant's Causeway, but even so to note near-by on the map such minstrel names as Coleraine and Limavady—yes, and Bushmills—gives a pensive pleasure. Off

Moville the tender comes down from Derry with Irish emigrants to board the ship, a fiddler playing reels to keep their hearts up. It's a longish trip from Derry in the tender, and I imagine there may well be sore hearts among them; though some who come to see them off have much drink taken and are in very lyric mood. But the eldritch voice of the ship's whistle, as she gives the tender a final salute, seems almost a refinement of cruelty. It is so very definite. But it is part of the "drill," as our Scottish friends term any manner of rite; and at sea that is all-important. At Moville I received an Irish telegram, in a bright green envelope. The official notations on the form were all in Irish, beginning *Telegrafa an Phuist*, which somehow brightly conveys a suggestion of swift urgency.

Then, for a week, you are drowned in vacancy. What British weather-reports always call an "anti-cyclone" (not, as anxious females sometimes imagine, a specially violent kind of cyclone; but a period of prevailing high barometer) was with us; day after day of fresh breezy blue. A caller air, as one Scot called it. And you move in the slow and yet regularly measured circle of ship-board hours, aware of Time only in the same vague accepting way that one is aware of the surrounding sea. Almost with incredulity you read, a week later, that "Heavy baggage must be ready to be

removed by 8 P. M." and they tell you that Nantucket Light Vessel will be "made" that afternoon. There were few passengers in the first cabin, and it seemed curiously like a house-party at some large country mansion. It would be true to say that the most exciting single event of the week (barring, of course, the little meetings when the Captain and the Chief talked unpublishably of the queer ways of the sea) was the night I had a vile cold. A kindly passenger gave me tablets of aspirin and phenacetin to take in the evening hot toddy. Later, as I lay gently tilting and steaming in my berth, I woke from marvellous dreams—dreams of half-apprehended glamour and magic; visions that drift away like smoke in moonlight but still leave behind them an uneasy suspicion of merriments and pangs beyond the humdrum of this daily plod. It was the kind of hypnotics most teasing of all: a dim continuation of something dreamed once before. I suppose that if it were not for the greatest peril of the sea (which is overeating) one might have more of these lovely clairvoyances on board ship. If only the steamship companies didn't feed one so well and so often, if one had the austerity to live for a week on toast and bovril and hot toddy, what golden fables might result.

And to-morrow morning we shall sight Liberty again. There's nothing so wholesome as to hear the

little jokes people in other lands make about one's own country. A story now current on the other side is of a Frenchman making his first visit to America; and as he came up New York Bay an American pointed out the Statue of Liberty.

"Yes," said the Frenchman, "we do that too."

The American was puzzled. "Do what?"

"Put up statues to our dead."

THE FULL-GROWN POET

IT WAS perfectly delightful. I happened to be spending the afternoon with Q. U. when the literary editor came to interview him. I was a little troubled, because we had been talking rather unco matters, and the poet was in spate. He was in that characteristic vein where beauty and ribaldry are so strangely mixed: which must be kept dark at all costs so as not to disturb people. If he were to continue like that . . .

"How do you do?" said the critic (at least that's how *Who's Who* lists him)—"Oh, hullo, Morley, you here? Well, well."

I made a motion to withdraw, but Q. shook his head. "Bill just wants to ask some insulting questions," he said. "I'd feel safer with a witness."

That's one of the things I love about Q., he always has the right thing to say (even in his poems).

Bill went straight to the point.

"You remember that thing of Whitman's," he said. "About the Full-Grown Poet. Well, never mind; what I mean is, I want to write a piece

about you with that title; I feel that you are Full Grown, you've got stature; excuse my being so frank. One of the things I'd like to bring out in my piece is that people don't realize the extraordinary preliminary anguish of creation, how the damned thing is threaded out of your very bowels; the contemplations, postponements, futile gropings, horrors, that precede every work of art."

Q. replied by telling a bawdy story out of the book of Genesis, which was gruesomely apropos. I hoped Bill wouldn't allude to it in his article. Even in the Borzoi Classics (each copy numbered) a similar episode was omitted from the Confessions of old Jimjam Rousseau. But Bill's powers of omission are merely vestigial.

The interviewer swivelled his eyes a little wildly (I could see his quick retina netting a mental picture of Q.'s workroom to give local colour to his sketch). A taxi-driver, swerving a dangerous corner in thick traffic, sometimes shows just such a phobic glitter.

"Fine!" he exclaimed. "I see you agree with me. Now what I like about your stuff is that, in spite of these preliminary horrors, when it comes out it comes clean. Technically clean, I mean, of course. You know Gide, the great French critic—not nearly enough known over here—quotes some lines of Baudelaire which he says form the *motif*

for a great treatise on æsthetic. Order, beauty, luxury, calm, and voluptuousness: that is Baudelaire's sequence; and Gide says those are the elements of nourishment for any great work of art. Oh, gosh, Gide is great stuff: whole gangs of the young Frenchmen just stem right out of his *Nourritures Terrestres*."

"Out of his what?" inquired Q.

"His *Terrestrial Nourishments*, one of his early books, published in 1897. Think of it, he was only twenty-eight when that book was written. It's a pity our folks aren't wise to Gide."

"Surely he'd be a lot less useful to you if they were," Q. began mildly. . . .

"But just let me say this before I forget it," cried Bill. "I forget whether it's Gide's idea, or my own deduction from him, but the notion is (and I believe you feel it too) that man is now *too* sharply sensitized, too self-aware; Nature's great hankering for specific self-consciousness has, in man's case, passed the margin of decreasing returns (psychological returns, I mean) and he's canted toward destruction. You know, the Henry Adams dope."

Q.'s lips began that jolly curling pout that always precedes one of his best, but Bill was leaning forward with ardent face.

"There are some fellows getting up a scientific symposium on Sex," he continued. "Something

really detached, you know; genuine philosophical observation; there's always been too dam' much gross biology in the Sex business; well, they've got a lot of really unbiased testimony in this thing, getting it down to harmonic rhythms, graphed in orgasmic curves; nothing prettier than those curves if you really get some perspective on them. Well, they've gotten frank comments from all sorts of authors and scientists, really liberal-minded people who understand the love life."

"Yes," said Q. firmly, "I've seen the thing. They sent it to me for my opinion. I showed it to—well, to a woman I know."

"Ah?" said Bill. I knew by his manner that he felt he had struck pay-dirt for his article. "What did she think of it?"

"She said, 'Those children had better get off the merry-go-round, they'll break their necks.'"

Bill grinned in his disarming way, but was not torpedoed. "Well, I don't know," he said. "These things are rather fundamental you know. For instance, they've discovered that organic life can actually be created by alternate light and darkness striking into shallow salt water. What is that but a corroboration of the old myth that 'Dame Venus, love's lady, was born of the sea'? Anyhow it all comes back to Walt's doctrine: whatever tastes sweet to the most perfect person, that is finally right. Havelock Ellis approves that too.

. . . But of course even the parson can quote Walt to his purpose. That's the beauty of Walt. He played everlastingly safe because he caromed off every cushion there is."

There was a moment of silence while Bill lit a cigarette. Q. creaked uneasily in his chair. His remarks are usually oblique to the course of the topic.

"A terrible thing happened the other day," he said. "I had been reading a volume of very modern poems, some rather bully stuff too, but a bit eccentric in typography and so on. I happened to meet the author at a dinner, and complimented him heartily on his opening poem, which seemed to me a specially rich, frolicsome bit of incoherent outburst. To my distress he was obviously annoyed. When I got home I looked at the book again. What I had thought was his opening poem was really the table of contents. Really, it was quite fine."

"Another thing I want to bring out in my essay," said Bill, "is the dignity of your attitude. I don't mean your present posture, with your feet on the desk; but your attitude toward life, toward criticism. I like your bare and robust simplicity. So many poets are madly hastening about, busy lecturing and meeting fashionables, they positively don't have time to say what they think. Perhaps it's safer that way. But there's a sort of elemental

massiveness about you, like Nature herself, who is strangely silent when interviewed but has her own secret convictions."

"That's just my trouble, Bill," said Q. "I haven't any convictions. But I feel sure that if we chin a while you'll find some for me. Better stay to dinner."

"I'm awfully sorry, old man, but I must catch that next train. Got my page to make up to-night." He began rummaging in his brief-case. I had a horrid fear that he was going to produce Q.'s new book and ask him to autograph it.

"Thanks awfully for letting me come," he said. "I wanted to be sure I had the right slant on your ideas. If you want I can send you a proof, so you can be sure I quote you correctly. Here's a little thing I've brought you, my *Ejaculations*, *First Series*. I've put your name in it for you."

He patted Q.'s shoulder affectionately, shook hands with me, invited us both to lunch, and started off. Then he turned back at the gate, his face shining with genial excitement.

"There's another line of Whitman's," he said, "that I'd like to quote you as saying. It's this: 'Let him who is without my poems be assassinated!'"

"Go to it," laughed Q. We watched the caller striding swiftly down the hill toward the station.

"Well," I said, "that's the kind of interviewer

who makes it easy for you. I love his way of making you stand sponsor for his own ideas. Nice cheerful fellow, anyhow."

"Cheerful?" said Q. "Is that your idea of cheerful? Poor heroic devil."

A COFFEE-BAR

AS YOU go up the Boul' Mich', toward the Luxembourg Gardens, just above the famous old Café de la Source (whose back door, opposite the Noctambules cabaret, always suggests the beginning of a story) you pass a little coffee-bar. Café-Bar de la Sorbonne it calls itself; and I close my eyes for a moment to see it plainly. Perhaps—indeed, very likely—it is a rainy evening and you slip in there for a café-cognac to think things over. At night it is a cave of various lights. The line of little red bulbs under the pavement-awning gives just a tender pink tinge to the air and to the piles of numbered saucers. Farther in is that magnificent terrace of bottles, some with green and blue foils on their necks. The ceiling is some sort of violent mosaic, the walls are mirrors, the cane chairs are striped orange and black. The waiters are coasting swiftly to and fro on the sliddery sawdusted floor, going from the bar to the larger room at the rear—2 *Billards Au Fond* says the sign—into which I never penetrated. The moist zinc counter sparkles with

reflections of glassy, twinkling colours. Even the buttered tartines shine with a greasy, pinkish light. Behind the bar is the man in shirtsleeves, with prominent, friendly, much-enduring eyes. How often I used to meditate as to the exact shade of temperament suggested by those eyes, which I found as difficult to put a word to as even Conrad and Ford Madox Ford (the author with the reversible name) found their fields of dark blue cabbages. They were eyes naturally friendly, but also with an under-light of weariness, or alarm, or passive suspicion; or a knowing calmness toward the stratagems of men. Eyes which, by always expressing a tinge of faint surprise, seemed to guard against the likelihood of ever being surprised further. So at any rate I used to think while I was standing at the bar drinking my coffee. *Au Comptoir, Café 30 c*, says the sign. Another subject of pondering was whether the errand boy from the near-by shoe shop had the faintest idea what the gilt letters on his cap could mean. He wore a braided uniform and the inscription on his cap was a perpetual indignation to me. Here, in the bosom of the Quarter on an actual *gradus ad Parnassum*, what legend did I find on that fellow's cap? PHITEESI, it said.

But it is not of the shoe-shop *chasseur* that I am really thinking. I am thinking of the girl, charmingly dressed in black, who used to come in every

morning at the same time to ask if there was a letter. Perhaps people are more indiscreet in their letters in France, and find it advisable to have them sent to café-bars instead of to their homes? Are they afraid that the wrong person will read them? They needn't worry about *me*, bless them; I find even the most innocent French script hard enough to decipher when duly addressed to me. But, anyhow, quite a lot of people have their letters sent to that café-bar. (Perhaps that is why the shirtsleeved proprietor shows that faint brightness of disillusion in his brown eyes.) And every morning the girl I speak of used to come in rapidly, go over to the corner of the bar where Shirtsleeves kept watch over his drawerful of small change, and ask if there was a letter. There was something delicately confidential in the way she asked: she did it more with her eyes than her voice. He would glance at the row of letters tucked into the foot of the mirror and gravely shake his head. Sometimes she was positive the letter was there, if he would only take it out from the row (politely arranged addresses inward so you couldn't spot the names). That third one from the left, it looked exactly (and I thought so, too) as though it were hers. But no.

She would console herself with a cup of black coffee, while I was sideways admiring the really charming trimness of her silhouette, seen against

the bright flow of the Boulevard outside. It seemed to me detestable that she never got that letter. I even thought of writing one to her myself, if I had known exactly how to direct it. It would have been fun to watch her reading it. But, of course, it would only have troubled her. After her coffee she always flitted off rapidly, down the street, on her way to work, I suppose. I am still wondering whether she ever got the letter; and if so, I hope it said what she wanted to hear. Her chin, against the coffee-cup, was lovely. It was all I could see, under the *cloche* hat; but it was a very Parisian chin, showing a hint of resolute *jem'enfichisme*. So that even if the letter never came, I feel sure the chin still has its small bravado.

Another woman in Paris. I had first seen her twelve years before, when she took my breath away: for I had always been told how much one ought to admire her. And I did, in a kind of dumb fool's amazement. So I went back to see her again.

You see her at the end of a long murmuring corridor. A long way off you see her whiteness: down that aisle that is full of moving people and the rustle of feet and hushed voices. She stands against dark curtains which seem black but prove, on approach, deep red. Tremulously, expecting the old thrill, you come near, disregarding the others who stand on each side the way. You have disregarded everything else—the huge Roman

bathtubs (that would be so useful in some of the little Latin Quarter hotels) and the busts of Pallas. "That reminds me," said an American lady looking at one of these, "I want to go to Brentano's to see if the new *Ladies' Home Journal* has come in." And now you are in front of her—the Venus de Milo—and the old thrill doesn't vibrate.

The body—or as the American ladies say, the torso—is as noble as ever, but what has happened? It is heavy, muscular, sluggish. The face is void, drowsy, without meaning. How gladly you would sacrifice it to have the lost arms; which, perhaps, would bring her alive. You try to imagine what those great white arms could have been doing that would make her more a woman and less a goddess. Alas, she is just what a statue should never be—merely statuesque.

So I went away, wondering which one of us it was who had died in those twelve years. This, that we when young eagerly frequented, this that we were somehow taught to dream of as the ultimate perfection of classic form—well, how just that she seemed: how perfect and how formal and how stony. On any street corner I could see beauty that seemed more thrilling. But I was almost afraid to admit, even to myself, how disappointed I was. And then I was reading a recent issue of the *Transatlantic Review*. It is pleasant to admit that one always finds that magazine stimulating, because

Mr. Ford Madox Ford (the editor with the reversible name) says: "A man whose culture is insufficient to let him read the *Transatlantic* with pleasure is practically no better than a savage." And in that journal I found Havelock Ellis admitting the same thing about the Venus of Melos. She had died on him as she had died on me. I loved her no less, of course; but what I loved was not her majestic, heavy grace, but the memory of my own youthful zeal.

To have my secret unhappiness confirmed by Mr. Ellis was a joy such as confirmation always is. I felt the same way when, the other day, walking on a Brooklyn street, Walter de la Mare suddenly burst into praise of the mirthful magic of *The Wrong Box;* or when a Smith College girl asked me if there was in the world another book as amusing as Hamish Miles's *The Oxford Circus*. For it is confirmation that human beings most passionately seek. And if one knew why all merely æsthetic opinions grow, flower, and decay, one would know why it is that all the arts move gently along their destined loops and returning orbits. It would not be well to know, for we should all be less instant in our small concerns. It is well to feel sure of things while we may; and not remember that even the Ten Commandments are only approximations. . . . Recurring Decimals.

BETWEEN TWO CHAPTERS

BETWEEN two chapters of a task that completely absorbed him, a dream more real than any reality, a workman paused, and came (as they say) to life.

Every day (he said to himself) is an artistic whole: it comes out of nothing and goes back to nothing, like a perfect story. Even if empty, futile, or absurd, it is an orbed transaction. It is (you can't escape the phrase) rounded by a sleep. What is that word they have for people who are blundering somewhere too close to facts? Yes, morbid.

Every day, could he control his impatience, offers the workman the analogies he needs. Loneliness, self-disgust, postponement, mirth. Though he added "mirth" as an afterthought: for he suddenly realized that there are days when you don't laugh. Of course, one can always laugh on a moment's notice; but he was thinking of the sudden whoops of unpremeditated cheer. Such mirth as Pan and Cupid utter, sitting on a stump, when they think of the solemn rotarians on Olympus.

These dejected them from the mountain-top because they were too mischievous for Heaven and kept spilling their ambrosia on the tablecloth. (Bibs had not been invented.) So, with no place in Heaven they had to suffer on earth as though they were men. They found it more fun; no wonder they laugh.

The workman saw it was difficult to keep his mind from going back to that crystalline abyss between the chapters. Yet he felt it wrong to go back at that moment: for the task was one in which reason, calculation, sense, could play little part. It had to be dreamed. Every man is sometimes interrupted in the course of his doings by a fit of brooding. But think of a task that is entirely brooding. He refreshed himself by adhering to that thought that every day offers the analogies one needs.

This workman had had, in one day, not less than six adventures. (1) A friendly parson had told him that another parson had told *him* "Every preacher should read *Typhoon*." This turned on a bulb in the workman's mind: a whole chain of coloured bulbs, as on a Christmas tree. (If one goes out they all go dark.) Yes, indeed: every preacher ought to read *Typhoon:* he had never thought of it as a theological fable before. But it is, now, isn't it? (2) He was savage to a dog that had erred. This was a rambling dog of less than no

reputation who had, at a critical passage of the workman's reverie, interrupted him by a gross misbehaviour—which was not, perhaps, its "fault." (Imagine talking of a dog's "fault." I can hear Pan cackling on his stump.) He chastised the poor brute, thrust it out into a very cold night. Soon he was troubled and went on the porch to whistle. But there was no answer. This set him reading Meredith: he remembered the poem about thrashing a dog. It is not a well-known poem, for Meredith marred it by stilted lingo. He thrashed the English language as well as the dog. He was not so good, maybe, at the simpler moralizings. His extraordinary jargon required subtler themes for its felicity. Take *Lord Ormont and His Aminta:* magnificent passages, but how perilously close to Ouida is the general flavour.

(3) He saw a cat come up from the cellar and find unexpected scraps of fish in her plate. She flung herself upon them with a passion that revived his admiration of life. She crouched (her little propped elbows showing the lighter fur) purring and guzzling in ecstasy. He imagined how a tiger would look at a similar feast. (4) A child four years old, wearing only her shirt, was standing at a basin gravely washing her hands. He told her that a letter had come for her; that when she was ready for bed it would be read to her. She gave him brown eyes of solemn excite-

ment. "And then I can have it?" she said. (5) He was chopping a dead tree, by a frozen pond. The sharp ax shore clean patterny slants into the pink wood. "She must have some of the noble flavour of wood-cutting," he said, thinking of someone in the task he was working on. "I've dipped her too far in darkness." (6) He woke from a dream. I will tell you the dream.

There was a tropical sand beach; and for some unknown reason it was imperative that he and another man should swim, at once, to the town that could be seen a mile or so away across the water. The town was on cliffs that were lilac against sunset; a lighthouse winked jewel-pale in the honey-coloured light. Others were on the beach, hastening them on. They had run down to look for a rowboat, which wasn't there. They must swim. There was no inkling as to the nature of the danger, but there was instant necessity. They waded into the water, which was shallow so that they had to wade a long way, the other man a little ahead. The sandy bottom was heavy and sticky, the water in that ruddy light seemed thick and viscid. It was full of strange weeds, ferns, clinging sponges of vegetation; there was a feeling of crabs. At last the water was deep enough for swimming, but as they threw themselves forward for the struggle it seemed like liquid glue. They toiled and threshed in that warm slow element,

like flies in molten amber; the level sun gilded them with mocking light, the distant cliffs deepened to violet, night was onward. The other man drew slowly, slowly ahead. It was impossible, it couldn't be done, it ended.

Among the thousand haunting analogies of every day, how is the workman to choose those which will minister to his job? Well, that is his affair. Reasoning can help little. He ensues that "selected proportioned illusion of life" of which Walter de la Mare spoke in his lecture on The Supernatural in Fiction. He cannot compete with life itself in its fecundity. Just as psychic or physical shocks happening to the gravid woman will have their effect on the unborn child, so is it with a writer in travail.

It is a hard doctrine (said the workman, as he timidly returned toward that strange emptiness lying between the ink and the vision) but it seems as though every day is the microcosm. Every day, from toothpaste to toothpaste, is an artistic whole; it offers the fables we need if we have the courage to scan them. There, at the edge of his crystalline abyss he stands waiting the uncalculable bridge of dream: and the work itself must be rounded by a sleep. What was it Anatole France said? "No book is worth writing if you can completely understand it."

A MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES

THE Urchin and I were coming home from Baltimore with a suitcase full of old books, good old juvenile treasures such as *The Plant Hunters* (by Captain Mayne Reid, I hope I don't have to tell you) and *Voyage au Centre de la Terre* and *At the Back of the North Wind;* and even the tattered family copy of *Tom Holt's Log: A Tale of the Deep Sea.* I don't know who wrote it, for the binding and title-page are both gone; and I don't know whether I dare reread it, for it's sure to be a disappointment. But it contains Polly, the first girl in fiction I ever fell in love with.

Of course, quite a nice piece could be written about the sentimental pleasures of going along the shelves of vanished boyhood and bringing back, with an eight-year-old Urchin, some of the things that will now be his excitement. But while he was deep in *The Boy's Own Indoor Book* (Lippincott, 1890), seduced by the same fascinating chapter on "How to Make a Toy Locomotive" that used to delight me, I was getting out some

old schoolbooks from the suitcase. Here was the edition of Milton's "Minor" Poems that I had used—no, not so awfully long ago; in 1905, to be exact. I fell to reading the Notes, which fill 71 pages of small type. (The poems, only 56 pages of much larger.) Then, in the sweet retired solitude of the B. & O. smoker, Contemplation began to plume her feathers and let grow her wings.

I don't quite know how to admit you to the traffic of my somewhat painful meditatings except by quoting a few of the notes my startled eyes encountered. I had forgotten that schoolbooks are like that. It is astounding that any one ever grows up with a love for poetry. Was anything ever written more wholesomely to be enjoyed than *L'Allegro?* You remember the lines,

> To hear the lark begin his flight,
> And, singing, startle the dull night,
> From his watch-tower in the skies,
> Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
> Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
> And at my window bid good-morrow . . .

Fairly translucent, aren't they? Mark you then what the fifteen-year-old finds in the Notes:

> Then to come, etc. This passage is obscure. (1) It may mean that the lark is to come to L'Allegro's window and bid him "good-morrow." In this case

we must make *to come* and *bid* depend on *to hear* (41), and suppose that the unusual *to* before *come* is made necessary by the distance between it and the governing verb. But such a construction is awkward. The interpretation, moreover, forces us to make the phrase *in spite of sorrow* almost meaningless by applying it to the lark; it makes it difficult to account for L'Allegro seeing the performance of the cock described below (51–52); and, finally, obliges us to suppose Milton ignorant of the lark's habits, since the bird never approaches human habitations—an ignorance we are not justified in assuming if the passage can be explained in some other way. (2) Another interpretation makes *to come* and *bid* depend on *admit* (38). "Awakened by the lark, the poet, after listening to that early song, arises to give a blithe good-morrow at his window. Other matin sounds are heard, and he goes forth," etc. (Browne). Those who adopt this view explain that he bids "good-morrow" to "the rising morn," "the new day," or "the world in general." (3) Masson, however, thinks that L'Allegro is already out of doors. "Milton, or whoever the imaginary speaker is, asks Mirth to admit him to her company and that of the nymph Liberty, and to let him enjoy the pleasures natural to such companionship (38–40). He then goes on to specify such pleasures, or to give examples of them. The first (41–44) is that of the sensations of early morning, when, walking round a country cottage, one hears the song of the mounting skylark, welcoming the signs of sunrise. The second is that of coming to the cottage window, looking in, and bidding a cheerful good-morrow, through the sweet-brier, vine, or eglantine, to

those of the family who are also astir." This last interpretation is perhaps more in keeping with the good-hearted sociability of L'Allegro's character. But see Pattison, *Milton*, p. 23.

A little farther on we read in the poem that . . .

> Every shepherd tells his tale
> Under the hawthorn in the dale.

Tells his tale. Counts the number of his sheep (Warton, on the suggestion of Headley). For *tell* meaning "count" and *tale* meaning "number," see *Psalm* xlviii, 12, *Exodus* v, 8, though it must be confessed that when *tell* and *tale* are combined, as in the present passage, "the almost invariable meaning is to narrate something" (Keightley). In view of this last fact, *tells his tale* is also interpreted as "relates his story"—*tale* being taken either in the general sense of "any story" or in the particular sense of "a love-tale." "But (1) this [particular sense] would be a somewhat abrupt use of the word *tale*. (2) The *every* shows that some piece of business is meant. (3) The context too shows that. (4)The early dawn is scarcely the time for love-making.

Signor Allegro mentions mountains. The Notes retort smartly "There are no mountains in the vicinity of Horton, where Milton probably wrote these poems." The poem refers to "towers and battlements"; Notes give us: "These," says Masson, "are almost evidently Windsor Castle." "With wanton heed and giddy cunning," writes Milton, having a gorgeous time (his pen spinning

merrily for the instant) but Notes pluck us back with "The figure is an oxymoron; consult a dictionary and explain."

Truly, like the drudging goblin, the editor's

> . . . *shadowy flail hath threshed the corn*
> *That ten day-laborers could not end.*

Fortunately our friend Morning Face, at fifteen, pays little attention to the insinuating questions and cross-references of the editor. Nor do I wish to seem unkind. This sort of small-beer parsing has, I dare say, its usefulness. In the voice of genuine magistrates it may even be thrilling. But heavens! Do you intend children to read poetry as though it were a railway time-table?

In lines 317–18 of "Comus" Milton speaks (very prettily) of the "low-roosted lark" rousing from "her thatched pallet." I spare you the scholastic editor's explanation that "low-roosted lark" means "the lark in her low resting-place," and that "roost, even to-day, is used figuratively for any temporary resting-place." But on "thatched pallet" he is beyond price. Oyez:

> *Thatched*, as Masson suggests, may here refer to the texture of the nest itself, and not to the covering. Keightley, however, says: "The ideas here belong rather to a henhouse than to the resting-place of the lark, which has no *thatch* over it, and in which, as it is on the ground, he does not *roost*.

I'm sorry: I can't go on quoting these nonsenses. If the pupil paid any genuine attention to them, which probably he doesn't, he'd get a queer kind of notion of how Milton wrote. He'd imagine that *Comus* was put together with the author's eyes on Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Shakespeare, and what not, picking out the plums. Of course, a thing like *Comus* is likely to pass like a swoon over the head of Fifteen anyhow; it is too full of the things that no gross ear can hear. Yet it would seem that an annotator might say less about the Earl of Bridgewater and more of the fact that the masque was written by a boy of twenty-five, which accounts for so much that is gloriously Bachelor-of-Artish in it. Instead of memoranda about "pleonasms" and "quadrisyllables" it would perhaps make the thing more human to the luckless pupil if he realized that the Lady was so obviously a phantom of a high-minded young celibate's imagination. How delightfully young-Miltonian she is: how differently he would have done her after his marriage to Miss Powell. And the simpering and gooseberry-headed Brothers. . . . But I'm not a teacher of literature, I have no right, probably, to expose my own ideas about such matters. After reading through the Notes on *Comus* in this very reputable edition (still used by thousands of children) I seemed to have been present at a murder. I could see the corpse of

Milton in the ditch, and the bloody Piemontese—or was it the Modern Language Association—marching in lock-step down the highway.

The disturbing part of it all is that it renews the unpleasant suspicion that the professional teachers of "English" do not always have any very clear idea of what literature is all about, or how it is created. Such pitiable haggling over absurd irrelevancies is, in Don Marquis's fine phrase, to play veterinary to the horse with wings. Poetry, God help us, is men's own hearts and lives; it is both a confession and a concealment. It rarely means exactly what it seems to. If we knew why Milton reached his most magnificent vibrations of eloquence when speaking for Comus and for Satan we might know why—in the good old Lexicographer's phrase—he suffered at Cambridge "the publick indignity of corporal correction."

Poetry happens when a mind bursts into a sudden blaze; and the annotators gather round, warming their hands at a discreet distance as they remark that such and such a glowing ember is an echo from Horace or Virgil, or a description of Windsor Castle. As though a poet like Milton, in his godlike fit, gives a damn where the mysterious suggestion arose. To margent loveliness with such trivial scribble is (let's adapt one of Comus's own lines) to live like Poetry's bastards, not her sons.

How shall we justify the ways—not of God to man, but of teachers to literature? And you will hunt in vain in the textbooks for the most human tribute ever paid to Milton. It is this: the only time Wordsworth ever got drunk was when he visited Milton's old rooms at Cambridge.

A PACKAGE

THERE is a passage at the end of *Alice in Wonderland* that excellently describes how some farmyard sounds, recurring under the dream, gradually break through the mist of Alice's fancy and bring her two worlds into one.

Living in a dream at Donville in Normandy, there were three special sounds, endlessly repeated, that used to come chiming through the uneasy apprehensions of one who sat in a thatched cottage trying to write. The jingling bells of the baker's high-wheeled cart and other *fournisseurs* who sped merrily outside our stone wall. The sudden appalling outcry of donkeys, like the scream of a rusty pump-handle. And, behind all other voices, the solemn hoot of the narrow-gauge train on the Chemin de Fer de la Manche. Such a little railway, and it took itself with such charming seriousness.

Yes, I am thinking this morning of those serious little trains that go trundling northward from Granville, through Bréhal with its slender spire, and Chanteloup with its château, along the green trough of the Sienne; past Gavray and Hambye

(where is the ruined abbey) to Percy and Tessy. I can see the little engine, with two jacks on the bumper ready to hoist it back on the track if anything goes wrong. The engine has very tiny drivewheels and a very tall smokestack; on the front of the boiler is a big handle that makes it look more than ever like a toy to be wound up. Then there come a couple of freight cars, and two wagons for passengers. There is a first-class compartment upholstered in red leather, but I never saw any one riding in it. Along the top of each car is a signboard that recommends *Benedictine* or *Amer Picon* or something else to drink. And you sit on the wooden seats and watch the butterflies scared up in clouds as you go puffing through the slanting Norman meadows at perhaps ten miles an hour. At Bréhal you wait fifteen or twenty minutes while they shunt on a truck of baled seaweed. At Ver (the right name for a fishing village) the anglers get in with their creels of catch.

I like the Chemin de Fer de la Manche for taking itself seriously. Even when it misses the connection at Cérences (where it crosses the full-sized railway) you won't get any humility out of the young conductor. With a horn to squawk, a whistle to blow, a big leather box full of tickets of different colours and ratings, all sorts of miscellaneous baggages to hoist on and off, and a big turnip watch to look at now and then, he is a

felicitous youth. I only wish he were a little more powerful, considering the weight of some of the dunnage he hefts. I have a horrid feeling that he is overstraining himself sometimes.

But now you are wondering why I am thinking of the Chemin de Fer de la Manche this morning, and why I can suddenly hear the dignified and continuous whistle of that little train. (It would go faster, I think, if the proud engineer didn't spend so much steam in whistling.) I will tell you why.

One of the pleasant perplexities in going abroad and then coming home again is connected with the matter of parcels. In spite of careful instructions, people will mail packages to your foreign address. They arrive after you have left, and then what happens?

There are several stations of the C. F. M. in Donville: in this way Donville and the railway, though both very small, keep up their self-esteem. There is Donville-Blancs Arbres, for instance, and Donville-Something else, and Donville-Triage. (Just what *Triage* means I never could quite find out.) These stations are all very minute, but they are carefully listed on the timetable. Donville-Triage was *our* station. And the other day I get a letter from the station-master at Donville-Triage. I am sure he remembers me; he will not have forgotten how, the first time I wanted to take a ride on the C. F. M., I went down to call on him the

evening before to present my compliments, apprise him of my intentions, and get all the dope. I wanted to know specially how to buy the right kind of ticket for riding in one of those open carriages. I must effectuate my traject in full air was what I told him. He was pleased at my enthusiasm and promised me everything. But then when the train came (it leaves Donville-Triage at 10:15, in case you should want to take it) they had left off the open carriages that day.

Well, it appears from the Chef de Gare's letter that someone, whose name he puts down as Fibert Saint Phila (my guess is that it's someone on Filbert Street, Philadelphia, but I have no notion who) has sent me a package, and the question is what shall be done about it. I believe, for the honour of the Chemin de Fer de la Manche, I will copy the letter in exact translation:

Station of DONVILLE-TRIAGE
27 December, 1924.

Dear Sir:

There is arrived in the Station addressed to you, dispatched by Mr. Fibert Saint Phila, merchandises as follows:

1 Postal Packet

which are at your disposition against the sum of

O Fr. 86 for carriage
O Fr. 25 for expense of notification
Total 1 Fr. 11.

I pray you to have these merchandises carried away immediately, warning you that at the expiration of the hereinunder-indicated delay they will be submitted to the legalities of storage determined by the tariff.

The person who will take delivery in the Station will have to be bearer of the present letter fortified by your signature at the bottom of the following notice.

If they were not lifted away from the Station in the 48 hours from the putting to post of the present letter of advice, they would be able to be trucked away from the office, and without other warning, into a public magazine, where they would remain at your disposition.

I have the honour to salute you.

THE CHIEF OF THE STATION.

My first thought on receiving this was to write to the friendly Chef de Gare saying that whatever may be in the parcel I will give it him as a present. But, with my usual slackness about letters, I didn't do so; besides, that might involve all sorts of legal correspondence, signing of international waivers and what not. I remember what trouble I got into when a friend of mine, touched by my wails about French pipe-fuel, sent me a package of tobacco from America. I was pursued all summer by mandamuses from Paris urging me to appear and explain why I was importing contraband. I think the best thing to do is allow the Donville-Triage station-master to believe me dead.

Besides, the parcel is probably only a book to autograph. Few people realize how much woe has been caused in this world by the two Eddies (Eddie Bok and Eddie Newton) who wrote books describing how they began when very young to collect autographs and never took No for an answer. There isn't a mail nowadays arriving in the home of any one who ever published a book that doesn't contain letters from Young Collectors. They even send you the wretched books, taking it for granted you'll sign them and wrap them up and send them back. And then, by-and-bye, they write and accuse you of theft.

But I like to think that the little train came puffing up the valley from Granville to Donville-Triage, along the Road of Iron of the Sleeve, carrying a package with my name on it.

The Chief of Station, looking over his records, must occasionally see that name and wonder what became of the strangely eloquent and ungrammatical alien. He will not realize, perhaps, that I wear a part of my heart in La Manche.

A BIRTHDAY LETTER

(FEBRUARY 10, 1925)

YOU understood about human weakness, so you will know how it is that I have left writing for your birthday until this last possible moment. I've been looking over some of your old letters. I don't do so often, it is too troublesome to see how some have misfeatured you. Then last night, about bread-and-cheese time—the *wishing* time of the evening you used to call it, when one rather hankers for some friend to drop in (to get between one's self and Eternity) —I began gaping stupidly into the fire, wondering how to light a candle for your cake. It was a different fire from yours: a fire of logs: wood that might have been made into desks. It was silly of me to sit brooding there, for to you of all men a letter should be the unstudied excess of the mind. But it was the distance between us, as snow was sifting, that chilled my fingers. You have said pleasant things about the difficulties of Distant Correspondence; but no letter was ever addressed you from so far as this. I sat there,

empty of everything but angry love. I could not write, so in your honour I had some hot water with its Better Adjunct, and went to bed.

What can I tell you that would interest you most? There are still Richardsons about (you remember him, the fellow who used to keep you waiting for your holidays? What an uneasy immortality he got himself thereby); and fellows like Rickman, of whom you said that he didn't have to be told a thing twice, are still rare birds. But it is as impossible to be bored on Murray Hill as it was on Fleet Street. Your old anxieties about abstaining from tobacco and liquor would be made more metaphysical here, since the abstention is supposed to be compulsory. You'd be amused, if you knew how you are regarded as a gospel for the young, "studied" in schools, your desperate and special humour conned as a textbook of "whimsicality." Yes, they still label you "the gentle." They have forgotten your letters to S. T. C., imploring him to substitute drunken, shabby, unshaven, cross-eyed, stammering, or any other epithet that rang true in your ear. So endlessly has your "gentleness" been drummed into young ears that there has been, among our more savage juniors, a kind of odd blindness as to the real you. Perhaps they do not know you as you are in your letters. The rest of you, I must confess, it is long since I read. I am not a syste-

matic reader, I love to gather my notions of people from their casual ejaculations rather than where they open themselves deliberately. So it is in your letters that I have you and hold you. There you have taught us, more than a hundred novelists could do, what love means. It suffers long and is kind. There I see your trouble and weakness so much greater than many others' strength. There I see you laughing at solemn apes; I see your divine silliness and your rich shrewdness. Sometimes, when my self-pitying generation beats its breast, I think of your magnanimous patience. I think of your rockets of absurdity, sent up like sea signals on a dark sky of loneliness. I think of those last days when you and Mary said that the auction posters were your playbills. I think of your great love story—yours and Mary's—perhaps the bravest in the world. Then I wonder whether some of us nowadays should not write an *Apologia pro Vita Sua*—an Apology for living in a Sewer.

You could remember "few specialties in your life," you wrote once for someone (a publisher, perhaps?) who wanted a blurb about you. Except, you added, that you "once caught a swallow flying." Indeed you did: the wild fierce bird of laughter with wet eyes. I think that to have known you when you had been walking arm in arm with Barleycorn and cast no shadow on the

pavements of Covent Garden would have been very close to my idea of religion. I smile, as you did, to remember that the Woodbridge Book Club blackballed your volume. There was something in it—they did not know just what—that was not quite seemly. This implicates me, too, for some of my forbears, I suspect, may have cast a black pellet or so in that matter. I apologize: and neither of us loves them any the less for their genteel simplicity. And indeed that strange fancy of yours, when brightened into flame by understanding intercourse, must have been a lovely and reproachable sight.

We shall receive no letters in the grave, someone said: Dr. Johnson, perhaps. It is just as well, for you would scarcely relish this one. But it had to be written. If there are 150 candles on this cake of yours, they will be put there by the 150 who think of you not as the gentle, but as the tormented, desperate, mad, and tipsy Elia. Still, as you said of the *Ancient Mariner*, literature can sting us through sufferings into high pleasure. "I shall never like tripe again." Once you wrote "I never saw a hero; I wonder how they look." Ah, dear Charles, you need not have searched far. Mary could have told you.

THE MATERIAL TO THE ARTIST

I HAVE seen it coming on. Now it must be said. It is my dangerous privilege to tell you what I seem to have discerned.

Happiest, unhappiest of creatures! Do you know what you are? I will tell you. I will tell you, though I hate the word, misused by thousands of canting weathercocks. Yet among those who have taken out their passports for that foreign land the word is still valid. Poor soul, you are an artist.

You are an artist; an artist in the true sense; in the sense that thousands of men and women who never set hand to manuscript or canvas or clay, who work in offices and ride in daily elevators and tend babies in the suburbs, are also artists. You are an artist because you feel; yet mere feeling does not make you an artist. You are not an artist because you are unhappy, or because you are wilful, or because you are impatient with conventions and things that rhyme with long ago.

No, my dear; the artist, more than any other, values conventions at their high serene worth. Conventions—comings together—of the apt congruent mood, circumstance, intuition. And when he ruptures convention he does it consciously, meaningly, that the audience may be aware the convention exists. "I can do without God," one may have said to himself. But the mere so saying proves His existence. You are an artist because you feel—and control and modulate your feelings. "Waking life is a dream controlled," said Santayana.

You are an artist, my dear, because you are aware of the rich medium of pathos, absurdity, glamour, in which all human actions are set. You are an artist because you are aware. Aware of those little characteristic things, those strange revealing episodes, outcroppings of mirth, of horror, that typify the whole of life in miniature. You are a microscope. You are an artist in the sense that the cubist painter Nevinson is an artist, the poet de la Mare is an artist, the architect Gilbert is an artist, the paragrapher Adams is an artist. You see the world in a grain of sand. It is no credit to you. That queer besetting sense of values was born in you, somehow. A wind blew—a mandrake root yelped—a star slid—there it was. You found in your heart that mad conviction that the whole gigantic show of earth and behaviour

was set in motion for you alone. That the planet has laboured and created railway terminals and terraced buildings and beautiful women and toy balloons and subway cars full of dogged faces—for you, for your devoted amazement. For you, for this your moment of pitiful scrutiny, for this latest tremor of crumbling Now, the vast edifice of fairy tale swinked upward. Like the fiery bird of fable, you rise from red embers of poor burning selves and ecstasies forlorn. In this glory of you, you can afford to be humble. Lord help you, happiest, unhappiest of creatures.

And what have I to do with this? I am acting merely, for the instant, as the material for your art (don't misunderstand me). I am spokesman for the empty paper, proxy for the chunk of stone. I know that you will blunder; that you will see falsely; overboldly perhaps, overtimidly perhaps. I know you will be troubled. "A tadpole in a sea of flame," someone said. But your hunger will carry you through—your hunger for human contact, your passion for honest human value. This power, this power that is in you, will blunder; will warm you with shame in your lonely bed at night. But, knowing how your thoughts run, of one thing I am certain. You will never overdraw your account in the greatest security of all. You love life, and none of your checks on that commodity will come back cancelled *No Funds*. Let me give you,

for your private ledger, three mottoes. Here they are:

> It is only the generous who give to the rich, the big who praise the big; the niggardly salve their consciences in doles to the humbly poor, making life into a pilgrimage of greedy patrons in search of grateful victims.
>
> ELIZABETH BIBESCO.

> The nobler a soul is, the more objects of compassion it hath.
>
> BACON.

> I wear a high hat because it's a Charm against passion.
>
> —From *Roger Bloomer*, by J. H. LAWSON.

This last—how superb it is—from that remarkable play by John Howard Lawson is, though ironically uttered, the perfect sentiment for the artist. He must have passion; but he must charm it; he must sing to it; he must soothe it to his needs, to the needs of other desperadoes.

Does that sound cowardly? Is it praise of the small sconced glim rather than of the blazing torch and cresset—that lights fools and wise men both the way to dusty death? I don't know; nor any man. Nor does it matter. The wind of your desire will move through you and speed you in your own channels. You will hardly even know how you have chosen. Being what you are, I know—aye, too well I know—that I (only a mouthpiece here

in behalf of your still blank foolscap) can teach you nothing of the meaning of the artist's desire. Yet (I speak as the voice of your unwritten dreams) the anxiety of the Material is no less real than the yearning of the Workman I shall blow through you as the wind; pattern your darkness as the stars. And even that will not be enough. Oh, brave fabric of life, that waits to be possessed, moulded, held and shaped and kenned. You have had the heroics so far; now let me speak the lines. Can the Pen (which is you) tell the Paper (which am I) anything about wanting? Poems must be lived before they can be written, I heard you say. Aye, but who has more fully lived the wistful poem of not being fulfilled? It is I, not you, that shall be the mover. I shall wet your nib and I shall speed your hand. Passion, pride and fury, and pitiable humility, too—these are mine. Are they less noble than your small zeal of achievement? I shall be God; you the ritual. You shall never possess me. "Grave is her shape, and sweeter unpossessed." Yet . . . it was not she who said so.

To some such purpose, maybe, the fabric speaks to the fabricator. And now, returning to our original parts—beloved and lucky rascal, I repeat it: you are an artist. You are an artist because you see the shadows cast by the actors. Life, clumsy or malicious electrician, throws crosswise shafts upon his puppets; each is mimicked not only by one

shadow but by several. You are aware of these shadows, which so many do not see. Are you a *creative* artist? Is your trouble such that it forces you to communicate it? That I cannot tell. In any case, these strange, self-comforting, and self-harassing perceptions of ours must be our best consolation. They must be the shadow of the great rock in a weary land. Even so, a shadow is never more than a shadow.

My mind goes back again to that play, *Roger Bloomer*, which I have just read. A strange little play; very young in its rebellions; very old (as old as *Faust*, whatever the childlike critics may say) in its jolly and ingenious technique. There are some closing lines that struck me as nobly fine:

I've given you yourself, take it. . . . Face the music, falling about you like rain.

IN ITALICS

I SHALL make a botch of what I'm about to say, because I fear the vibration that is in my mind is not quite conveyable. But anyhow, the rain sopping on the little balcony outside my window, and the look-off over Manhattan's cliffs, and the card here beside me, all make the attempt irresistible.

I have just discovered Italy. I know that in the eyes of cultivated readers I am going to be ridiculous; but that doesn't matter. I'll be honest with you. Since a certain rainy day in the summer of 1912—a day when it rained just as it is raining now, and I sat in a hotel in Basel and decided it was too wet to bicycle over the Alps—I had said to myself (subconsciously, not aloud, where I could be overheard) that I could get along without Italy. I said to myself that there were already too many things in the world to be thought about, and that I'd have to sacrifice some of them. I had America to think about, and England, and Germany, and France; and then, later on, getting married and earning a living and raising a family; and

I fell in love with Manhattan, and (in a kind of shame-faced way) I said to myself that the new Cunard Building was probably a perfectly adequate substitute for Italy. . . .

And then to-day, coming into the office quite unsuspecting any staggering blow, there was that postcard on A. L.'s desk.

It's no use trying to describe that card to you, though I'll tell you enough so that you can identify it. Underneath the picture is written FIRENZE, Cappella Riccardi—Viaggio dei Magi—Un Cavaliere—Dettagli—Benozzo Gozzoli. The picture is of a young fellow in a white embroidered cloak, with a crown and long curly hair, riding on a white horse. He is accompanied by spearmen. In the background is a very consciously sculpturesque rocky hillside, a man galloping on horseback with lifted spear, and a couple of those very capersome greyhounds loved by Renaissance artists. These are pursuing the hindquarters of a flitting quadruped who has very nearly escaped, for his front half has got right off the postcard. If the man on horseback doesn't hurl his spear quickly the venison will get away. The white horse on which the protagonist is riding is (as they say in art catalogues) richly caparisoned; he is lifting his right front knee with the jolliest enthusiasm and pride; under his belly is visible another dog, of a quite mongrellish sort, who (this is only our guess) has

attached himself to the procession on his own hook and is enjoying himself greatly. The pricker of the rider's spur comes just over our mongrel's head and looks like a star honouring him.

Now this, I am painfully aware, gives no impression at all of the picture. And indeed, if the loveliness of the scene were transmissible in words, why should Benozzo Gozzoli have painted it? I only mention these details in order to enable connoisseurs of these matters to identify the thing and give them the pleasure of smiling at my simplicity. A. L., I learned, keeps this card on her desk to remind her that "beyond the Alps lies Italy." And I have borrowed it from her for a day or so until I can find some art dealer who can sell me a small photo of the thing.

For if this is what Italy means, I said to myself as I went through the curious adventures of a rainy day among those downtown cliffs—which included lunching with a pensive mandarin beside a window on the thirty-eighth floor and looking off at pyramids and pinnacles whorled in sifting mist and rain while we plotted a little innocent sorcery together—if this is what Italy means, it is high time that (in the charming phrase of our land) I "met up" with her. Of course it is true that I had once before, lunching aboard the steamship *Giulio Cesare* and tasting *asti spumante*, had a vague suspicion that Italy and I would get on well together.

But, remembering my disappointment on that wet day in Basel, I had always said sternly, No, I can get along without her. Well, a wet day divided us; now a wet day has brought us together again. Then (how divine is chance!) in came Hugh Western, the Chicago sonneteer. Hugh is a student of Italian art; I broached my naïf excitement to him and showed him the postal card. When he saw it, a flash—like a flicker of spiritual lightning—went over his serene, well-bred features. That was enough. Gozzoli, evidently, was an old friend of his. And if Gozzoli could kindle that look of understanding on the face of a Chicago sonneteer, then, by heaven, Gozzoli is the man for me. Look here, I said to A. L., I'm going to write a letter to this fellow Gozzoli. She didn't quite perceive, and began to explain that Gozzoli . . . Never mind, I said, I'm going to write him a letter. And one of these days I shall.

The youth, the glamour, the enchantment, the shining witness of life as it needs must be lived, emanate from that painting so strongly as to change and fortify the whole current of a man's day. That white horse with its gallant rider—one of the Medicis, A. L. told me—moved invisibly before me all day. I trod in his company. I was the yellow dog that joined the parade; there I was, under his horse's belly, but the star-point of his spur glistened over my humble head. And even

here in this cruel and magnificent city, I said to myself, life can yet be made noble and proud by art. A. L. begged me to get hold of some books and read up about the Medicis and Gozzoli; but I don't believe I want to. I prefer to imagine them, until I can lay eye upon the painting itself. A mural, she said. One of those things they paint on walls, I suppose, to prove that there are no walls.

I wish Benozzo Gozzoli could have seen the view I see now as I am typing this. The thousand golden panes of the Hudson Terminal, the Tel and Tel, and the lesser buildings between, shining through the dusk and wet; the dark little chapel and graveyard below; the winged statue dim against the heavy gray sky. Bless him, the man who did that horse's mild proud eye and curly nostril, the petulant, snobbish, and yet almost girlishly lovely face of young De Medici, Esq., the man who knew how to give those spears just the right angle of slant and the mongrel dog exactly his correct simper of idiotic fool satisfaction—that man would have known what to do about Downtown Manhattan at night. For what are we to do about it? How are we, in this burning and maddening civilization, to recapture that almost insolent glory of artistic fecundity? How shall we "like pelicans from sore-tweaked bosoms feather a nest for some great egg of song"?

That evening I broke the law.

EVERY TUESDAY

EVERY Tuesday," wrote John Donne in one of his weekly letters to his friend Goodyer, "I make account that I turn a great hour-glass, and consider that a week's life is run out since I writ. But I if aske my self what I have done in the last watch, or would do in the next, I can say nothing; if I say that I have passed it without hurting any, so may the Spider in my window."

And this came to me with a shock (it is the splendour of Donne that almost everything he wrote comes to you with a crash of recognition) because it was precisely my own case. For it is Tuesday evening that I had set aside in my budget of Time for writing the weekly Bowling Green. Though I never manage to get at it until Wednesday forenoon, just before the printer is expecting his copy. Tuesday evening, when one knows that the Green is debit, so becomes the most fertile of the week for something else. It becomes the best of Shroves.

The revival of interest in Donne, gathering under-current for several years, now is unques-

tionable. Two new books about him, this winter alone; and in "Elizabeth's" just-published novel, *Love*, I find one of her characters busy reading Donne and hankering to talk about him. In such brilliant poets as Elinor Wylie and John Crowe Ransom I seem to observe a voice that the Dean would have understood. It is plain that there is something in Donne that speaks to our present time.

I am an incapable porter of such explosive baggage as John Donne's writings. A little flash of him goes me a long way. Even books about him carry the same difficult voltage, so that I dip into them rather than ponder through. But in Hugh Fausset's *John Donne: A Study in Discord*, though I have not traversed it all, I found suggestions that led me toward private analogies valuable to myself. Mr. Fausset, in his lively excitement about Donne, wanders into some phrases that struck me as indiscreet (e.g., "the rhythm of sense plays a costive counterpoint upon the fluid rhythm of sound")—but a man can hardly dig deeply into Donne without becoming a bit arrant. The important thing is that Mr. Fausset does convey the sense that in Donne's pages "a great prince in prison lies." I always think of Donne, in his ecclesiastic robes, as Bagheera the black panther—beautiful in eloquence and latent ferocity; and carrying, under his dark fur, the bare callous of the

old chain—the king's palace at Oodeypore. A "baffled centaur" is Mr. Fausset's happy description of him at one angle of his life.

Mr. Fausset thrillingly enumerates Donne's P's and Q's—mostly P's, as his account is quartered into The Pagan, The Penitent, The Pensioner, The Preacher. Of the Pagan label (I must look up that word: didn't it mean, originally, only a suburbanite—a commuter?) I think Donne would have relished William James's reply: "Don't call me a pagan: it sounds too sectarian." For there was all Heaven and hell in him, and a heat that dissolves the gum on any paper *affiche*. Mr. Fausset gloriously quotes, as description of Donne's own way with a quill, his wildly humorous account of the literary style of the Holy Ghost:

> The Holy Ghost is an eloquent Author, a vehement, and an abundant Author, but yet not luxuriant; he is far from a penurious, but as far from a superfluous style too.

Donne was a fountain filled with blood and ink. The only man who ever lived, perhaps, who could have written us an Old Testament measurably substitutional for the Jacobite, had that been lost. Give us a modern Donne and we will listen to these twentieth century versions of the Bible. No lesser maniac will serve.

There was something Spanish in him. Mr.

Fausset rather quaintly ascribes his sensuality to his Welsh blood; but this interest in Spain, from his childhood on, seems significant. Certainly there is something suggestive in the old legend—I don't know how old it may be; I invented it this minute—that Spain is the country where God lives. He lives there because He daren't turn His back on it; it is the weakest link in his chain of beads; there, if anywhere, He and the Demiurge will eventually "have it out." The most eloquent of our modern Satanophils have had a pinch of Iberia in them. At any rate Donne, like any sagacious Freudian, showed his passionate interest in Spain by going to war on her, in naval expeditions. That he was heartily seasick we know from his use of nauseous metaphor in later verse. But there was a Spain in his heart, and a Grand Inquisitor.

He is as modern, I think, as Sherwood Anderson; in fact, Mr. Anderson's washing-machine manufacturer—whom Mr. Anderson's fine imagination has long since transcended; for obvious reasons I do not say out-stripped—would have found much in common with Donne's frenzies. But even in his agonized third decade, Donne retained the redeeming buoyancy familiar to washing machines. He was the Ninety and Nine of the hymn, and also the Forty Four One Hundredths. He floated. It is about all we can say.

Perhaps one reason why Donne is so inscrutably

familiar, so couth and canny to our present generation of vipers, is that he did succeed in bruising the serpent with his heel. He learned, or almost we might say invented, the stunning truth that Man, the experimental artist, makes his greatest success when he plays over the head of his audience. Man's audience, of course, is Nature; and Nature, like any other audience, likes to feel that she is being given a Message; something that she (as they say at the ladies' clubs) "can take away with her." If you sing Mammy madrigals to her, she fills the house with automatic applause; but when you give her (as Donne did, from the pulpit of St. Paul's) the thrill of insane poetry, she listens in that uneasy awe and silence that is her best tribute to man.

I don't quite understand what Mr. Fausset means when he says that Donne "was neither a graceful nor a witty correspondent." To my taste his letters are the indivisible election of wit and grace. Mr. Charles E. Merrill edited some years ago the *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour*. In there, together with much more stately matter, you will find a little series of letters "To the worthiest Lady Mrs. Bridget White." They make me perfectly understand the Dean's skill with ladies. Apparently Mistress Bridget, who was only in her teens, was not very punctual in reply. After several unanswered sorties Donne writes:

MADAME,

I have but small comfort in this letter; the messenger comes too easily to me, and I am too sure that the letter shall be delivered. All adventures towards you should be of more difficulty and hazard. But perchance I need not lament this; it may be so many of my letters are lost already that it is time that one should come, like *Job's* servant, to bring word that the rest were lost. If you have had more before, this comes to aske how they were received; and if you have had none, it comes to try how they should have been received. It comes to you like a bashful servant, who, though he have an extreme desire to put himself in your presence, yet hath not much to say when he is come. . . . Your going away hath made *London* a dead carkasse. A Tearm and a Court do a little spice and embalme it, and keep it from putrefaction, but the soul went away in you: and I think the onley reason why the plague is somewhat slackned is because the place is dead already, and no body left worth the killing.

Your humblest and affectionatest servant
J. D.

Surely no woman could resist this. Nor could any God resist Donne's sermons.

STORMS AND CALMS

EVERY now and then there bobs up—not undiscouraged by the ingenious publishers—some argument as to the order in which the reader should "approach" Conrad's works. In a recent symposium "20 Famous Critics Tell Readers How To Start Reading Joseph Conrad's Books." To a publisher all critics are famous, just as in the dark all cats are gray. But the interesting thing to me is to observe the majority by which these old salted Conrad shellbacks advise the apprentice to begin with what Conrad himself called his "storm pieces"—*Youth*, *Typhoon*, *The Nigger*. It reminds me that Shakespeare's storm piece, *The Tempest*, is always put first in his collected editions. I wonder why?

I am not deposing any thesis; I am merely wondering. I suppose the most rational way of reading any man's work, and the most arduous, is in the chronology of its writing; so can you trace the course of his mind. But only serious students are likely to do that; most readers are more haphazard. And I have an affectionate disrespect for those

who will allow their dealings with so fascinating an author as Conrad to be too much dictated by what critics suggest.

I wonder, though, whether Conrad did not have a very particular tenderness for what he has called his "calm pieces"; and whether, for many readers (who find hurricane and breaching seas genuine vertigo to soft head and stomach), *'Twixt Land and Sea* and *The Shadow Line* are not a more tactful beginning? Of course, it is easier to admire storm pieces than calms; perhaps also easier to write them (I am not asserting; only wondering; nothing great is easy to write, I have been told). But I am often faintly surprised that in talk about Conrad one hears so little of *The Shadow Line* and the three tales in *'Twixt Land and Sea*. In the case of a man like Conrad I think you have to watch him carefully for his most significant utterances; and when he says casually in the preface to *The Shadow Line*, "I admit this to be a fairly complex piece of work," perhaps he covertly means, "This is a devil of a big thing if you have the wit to discern it." At any rate, it *is* a devil of a big thing; and if one considers the time when it was written (the closing months of that gruesome year 1916) it takes place as one of the most heroic achievements in a not easy life. In that story there is a sudden picture of a seaman at the ship's wheel at night, his brown hands on the spokes lit up in the

darkness by the glow of the binnacle. I will not spoil your pleasure in the picture by insisting on the symbolism that Conrad intended; he explains it himself in the tale; and perhaps one of his weaknesses was that of too often explaining symbolism. But the bronze-shining hands on that shadowy wheel, the ship becalmed, the anxious question "Won't she answer the helm at all?"—these are matters for as careful meditation as the Chinese coolies battered to and fro in the hold of the *Nan-Shan*. When Conrad gave *The Shadow Line* its subtitle, "A Confession," when he hoisted on its halliards that quotation from Baudelaire, he was doing something that deserves watching.

It is foolish of me to write about Conrad; and certainly I should never try to prejudice readers in favour of trying one special book before another. There are several Conrads that I have never read myself; perhaps I never shall. Up to the present I have as much of him under hatches as I can properly stow. I have, I think, much the same feeling that he had when he came up New York harbour in the *Tuscania*. After a long and very careful study of that skyline he retreated to the port wing of Captain Bone's bridge and averted his eyes. He had had all he could carry.

But, since none of the present symposiarchs seem to have mentioned them, I can't help saying a word about the extraordinary stories in *'Twixt Land and*

Sea. "The Secret Sharer," is it a magnificent allegory of the horrors of man's duality? Of course, it doesn't matter whether you believe it is or not; like all great fables the suggestion is so implicit that as soon as you try to define it you destroy it. There indeed is the trouble to which all writers of fable are victim: when you ask them exactly what they mean, you murder them. If the "moral" of the thing can be explained, it is vanished. It can only be felt. Take the case of another story in the same book, "A Smile of Fortune." There is some colossal irony lurking in the thing; but after perhaps half a dozen readings in the past ten years, I would not venture to graph it. Is Jacobus, the thick-lipped ship chandler, offered to us as a veiled hero or as a scoundrel eager to traffic in the allure of his bastard daughter? And the girl herself, can you tell me any more wretchedly pitiable prisoner, yet how her terror and slattern beauty and potential vitality haunt us from those dead pages. What does it all simmer down to in the end? A deal in potatoes—the potatoes that Jacobus "paraded" (glorious word!) on the table. Any one who would ask what that story "means" is absurd. It means just what to-day means, and yesterday, and a week from next Thursday.

I imagine (I'm only wondering, not asserting) that perhaps the men best fitted to relish Conrad, the men who have known something of the life he

describes and are also brooders on the interwoven toe and heel of destiny, are most likely to turn to his "calm pieces" for that enveloping haze of significance which is his greatest gift. An extraordinary duplicity of meaning shimmers in those tales; the slightest movement becomes heavy ("fraught," the reviewers would say) with omen. It is in such stories that he recurs to his favourite theme of the great security of that old sea life as compared with the unrest and fever of the land. Happy, happy man who through the most difficult years of manhood could mature himself in that hard and mannerly calling—"that untempted life presenting no disquieting problems, invested with an elementary moral beauty by the absolute straightforwardness of its appeal and by the singleness of its purpose." Exempt from false sophistication and ethical jugglery, exempt from cultivated palaver, he was free to deepen himself in that beautiful naïveté which all great poets must have. He became, one thinks, almost as naïf as Keats or Shakespeare, with a heart as open to moral simplicities, to honest and ironic sentiment, to simple humours that could even make their mirth over a pair of whiskers. Then, like the secret sharer, he "lowered himself into the water to take his punishment: a free man, a proud swimmer striking out for a new destiny."

So I am wondering. I am wondering whether

there isn't something in (for example) *The Shadow Line* that makes even *Typhoon* or *Youth*—yes, even *Heart of Darkness*—seem a trifle melodramatic? These great things, and heaven knows they *are* great, are so precisely what the literary critics *would* most admire. But somehow, hidden away between the lines, I feel more of the essential agony in *The Shadow Line* and *The Secret Sharer*. I haven't even mentioned "Freya," the third story in *'Twixt Land and Sea*—that desolately tragic tale that tells (if you choose to interpret it so) what happens to beautiful things when they run up against "authorities." These are all calm-water stories, laid in the luxurious Eastern sunshine that (Conrad suggests) has more psychic corruption than the fiercest northern gale. It is when becalmed that the sailor has time to think.

THE CREATIVE LIFE

AFTER reading *The Dance of Life** once, I thought: how agreeable to sit down and write copiously about it. After reading it twice, a more decent humility prevails. To "review" Mr. Ellis's fertile and fructuating book would be as impossible as to review life itself. For it speaks to those interior questionings and honesties where the happiest wisdom is silence. Yet, for an action to be comely (Mr. Ellis somewhere suggests) it need only be fitting to its particular relationships at its particular moment. The relation that has grown up between this book and myself is such that I would feel cowardly not to testify. And perhaps the man who has crowned his old age by this noble résumé of a life's thinkings would find no impropriety in a salute from a young ignoramus desperately but sincerely groping for those liberations of spirit that help to make life artful. It is by its echo in young and undisciplined hearts that Mr. Ellis's book will prove its virtue.

To make life artful. . . . It is living itself con-

*_The Dance of Life_, by Havelock Ellis.

sidered as an art that is the acorn of Mr. Ellis's foliage. Indeed, one has long suspected that the artists—using the word in no narrow sense—inkle truest happiness, for they have discarded (unconsciously, for the most part) the merely conventual and nonessential. Without the peace, the humility, the rigorous aversions, the charitable humours which we can learn from them, there is ill chance of our becoming more than mere botchers at this greatest of skills. Disobedience to the artistic instinct of the soul, its troubled but divinely judicious intuition of harmonies, is the most cruelly punished of human errors.

The dance of life! I have feared that to modern connotation Mr. Ellis's title may sound misleading: for the word *dance* has acquired slipshod and rowdy suggestions. The rhythms and measures he divines are more majestic and more obscure, more truly jocund yet also more tranquil, than those our mind is wont to image. One of the most beautiful things our time has invented is the slowed motion picture; just so we must conceive the pattern of the universe scanned on a scale that makes manifest its exquisite hesitation and pause. The recurring rondo of our joys and follies is a part of it, as much as the sprinkled movements of the sky. I was once one of a group of boys and girls that used to meet, in Oxford, to caper the old English country dances. In the rustic figures of

"Jenny Pluck Pears" and "Gathering Peascods" and "Up Tails All," in "Dargason" ("or, The New Sedany"), and "Three Meet" ("or, The Pleasures of the Town"), accompanied by those adorable gay and wheedling old musics, we youthfuls frolicked in a merriment that was immortally harmless, hale, brimming with utter fun. In some unquestionable way one knew one's self attuned to the full meaning and melody of life. This was play—that is to say, art—at its most innocent best: I have never approached any happiness like it. When I remember the perfected charm and gusto of that jolly sport, whether indoors or on green lawns or damp riverside meadows, I realize what Mr. Ellis means when he suggests the primitive sensibility of the dance as the germ of all thought, all morals.

But all advances in thought, as Mr. Ellis summons many testimonies to prove, are assisted by fictions. And this book itself, so full of brave encouragement, is, I daresay, fictive enough. For though he urges us to believe that perhaps the art-instinct is the *primum mobile* of the spirit world (just as some one element may be fundamental in all matter), yet we know ourselves too well to be over-hopeful. Is there any sensitive person who has not found himself continually hampered and thwarted in his justest impulses, calloused by the friction of competing hopes, crazed by the tragedy

of needless and meaningless hastes and bickerings, thus tottering an errant course rather than proceeding with the clear sobriety of art? Civilization, though it often extorts our reluctant admiration, yet is also maddening. I have seen a New York taxi-driver, spinning his cab round a crowded corner, unconsciously roll his eyes with just the bewildered frenzy of a dog that isn't yet quite certain whether to bite or not. I have ridden in suburban electric trains where the continual crashing of metal doors, jarring of windows, jolting of starts and stops, racing of belated passengers to leap aboard at every station, all combined in a hullabaloo so shocking that unless one retired into a secret core of indifference one would surely go insane. Only too well we know our lives to be absurd and unwholesome; and we seek passionately, impossibly, to be made significant and whole.

These contradictions and paradoxes of life as we know it, Mr. Ellis patiently and generously considers. With the occasional sprinkle of bitterness that is palatable in philosophy; with the nicest simplicity of manner, and (more important still) with an eye cleansed by feasting on the wideness of Time and Space, he takes us through the four great arts that are most urgent to our condition: the art of Thinking, the art of Writing, the art of Religion, the art of Morals. Ever since I first encountered the book, I have wished there

were some way of making it compulsory study for parsons. For though it gives little consolation to churches, it has profound energy for those who esteem religion as the noblest form of æsthetic.

The fiery particle will not be put off with quibble or evasion. It is, it *is* important and needful that one should at least try to live life as an art, that it should be exempt from pitiable hagglings and cowardly surrenders. And Ellis's special charm, perhaps, is that he keeps rediscovering to us those most precious of all secrets—our own thoughts, those we buried, forgot, or fled from in dismay. The notions we were a little leery of, that we folded neatly and hid under a stone while we went bathing in the clear swift stream of life, we here find again and recognize as the most important. His pages on the essential unity of science and art, for example. He insists that they are homoiousian (a word he does not use, but I do, for I love a good rollicking pedantry now and then). Those passages are the richest delight to any one who has been privileged to guess the imaginative poetical spirit that irradiates all genuine scientific inquiry. Everywhere he is on the side of the angels; and while he says very little that is novel or startling to any alert thinker, yet he says quite enough to galvanize many a merchant in intellectual hand-me-down and shoddy. And his substance is charmingly organized and thought out. The chapter on

literary art is truism to any intuitive lover of language; yet how admirably and winningly put. Always we find him taking the cudgel against stultifying rule and rigidity, the picayune pettifogging spirit that would construe the text of life as a proof-reader corrects galley slips. In the "Art of Morals," for instance, how eloquently he buttresses every artist's contention (sure to be misunderstood, of course) that to the philosopher there is no such thing as "morality," as vulgarly apprehended; for morality ceases to exist when it becomes conscious. Morality, of course, is merely what is mannerly and customary: and Mr. Ellis frankly would have us all as "immoral" as Jesus was.

What, then, if we try to lay penpoint upon it, is the cardinal bearing of this great book? I think it is this, that each of us (if capable of thought at all; and he excellently insists that not all are so capable) is an artist creating his own truth from the phenomena life gives him. The kingdom of Heaven is within us indeed, and each must be his own Buddha, his own Christ, his own Leonardo. This dark and pricklesome necessity surely does not imply any relaxing of our imperilled responsibility, rather an all the more stringent devotion to our little ember of artistic conscience. Out of these fantastic intractable materials that life has poured about us we must compose our picture as

best we may—like prisoners of war carving cunning toys of corn-cobs and peanut shells and chewing gum. Time—which is, I suppose, the canvas we paint on, the clay we knead—flows fast and faster—so fast, sometimes, we dimly suspect ourselves very close to the place it comes from. Every instant is an emergency, and we are apprenticed to the art of living before we know enough to have any choice. As so often on railroads, the brakeman doesn't call out the name of the stations until after the train has started. By the time we learn where we are going—it sounds very like Nothingness?—it is too late to cancel the ticket.

Any man who writes as plainly as Mr. Ellis of the real issues of life, is certain of a few sniffs and hoots. But he helps us toward the only task worth while, the only task that can bring us peace—the attempt to deal not as hucksters, but as poets, with the rough, blazing, infinitely precious fragments of life. He helps us to face the exquisite riddle with greater piety and courage, and to turn our necessity to glorious gain. Perhaps it is not inappropriate to say of his book, as he says of Lange's *History of Materialism* that so moved him years ago, "it can never be forgotten by any one who read it in youth."

A SEPARATION

I HAVEN'T seen her for four days. Not since she spent her first night (in a manner of speaking) away from home. . . . This, by the way, is for parents only. Others won't understand.

Babblings, as I call her when we are alone, is eight months old. As you know, about that age these minuscule creatures are likely to be turned over to the care of a nurse. Well now, *how* can I put it delicately? These outspoken medical fellows would simply say she had been weaned and leave it at that. The point is that the small creature sleeps in the nursery, and no longer in the bedroom with her parents. And so if you run for town early in the morning and don't get back at night until after dark, when will you see her? Not at all, until the week end.

I haven't seen her for four days: and walking home the other evening I realized what I had been missing. Why, her, the absurd microcosm. That little yammer, or (let's be honest) that sudden rousing squall, beginning in the middlenight as suddenly as a locomotive blows off steam; ending

with equal suddenness when a familiar form leaned over the crib; those queer rhythmical whimpers of cheer when, completely pleased, she was pushing herself down the psychic slopes of sleep; the excitement when she first rolled over, raised her head like a turtle, and gazed about with an air of triumph (until she learned that, also like the slug testudo, she couldn't get back) . . . these were what I lacked.

I *said* you wouldn't understand, didn't I?

But what I missed most of all were those private conferences we had, before breakfast, while I was getting dressed. The rest of the family being already at table, and cries coming aloft ("You'll miss your train"), what was I doing? Well, that was the time when I was calling her. . . I told you what I called her. We were alone. As I was tying my tie, she could watch me from the crib. I don't know just what she was laughing at. But anyhow, and since I'm not going to go into details, we had a few brief merriments together. We both understood them perfectly, each in our own way. She won't tell about them—no, not ever—because she won't remember them: and I am not one to let loose secrets shared with a lady, even the youngest. No, we'll respect an eternity of taciturnity. I'll have to confess, however, that there was just a little element of trickery on my part. Because, dressing finished, tie tied, hair brushed, all ready

to make a break for the cup of coffee and the train, I wasn't quite honest. I gave her a kinsprit grin, and said (this was pretty bad): "I'll be right back." I think she got the impression I was just going out of the room for a moment or so and would return to be entertained further. In that way I got off without distressing her. And then I never did come back, not till night time. It wasn't quite straight, maybe. I remember that her eyes followed me to the door.

This is bad; because I'm giving the impression that she liked me as much as I liked her. That's not so, of course. In a few seconds she had forgotten me entirely. She had far better company, all day long. The best company in the world, indeed. And of course I had plenty to think about, myself. But I didn't realize, until the bedroom was so painfully quiet, how much she meant. . . . And I haven't *seen* her for four days, not since she spent her first night away from home, in a manner of speaking.

THE UNWRITTEN BOOK

MANY critics have spoken—and many more will speak—of Doughty's *Arabia* as one of the world's great travel books. What they have said is true: though we doubt if that terrible, exhausting, and fiery work will ever be popular, though it may readily become fashionable.

But there is a book of travel (or travail) still to be written, dealing with a wilderness even more appalling than the Arabian desert, a book that might possibly be just as great as—or greater than—Doughty's. That is the book, unwritable perhaps, that would deal adequately, honestly, with the terrible, magnificent jungle of New York. Perhaps desert is a better word for it than jungle, for in a desert the sand leaves no trace of your passage. But I stick to the idea of a jungle, for it has strange and fantastic analogies. Through these vast thickets, trudging elate or despairing, each explorer beats out his own little paths of precarious safety. Lie covert near where the spiritual tracks cross one another—in a newspaper office, for ex-

ample, a bewildering ganglion of threaded human nerves and passions—and watch the inhabitants of the forest padding softly on their strange quests. For, like the wild animals, each has his own secret, instinctive way toward some Drinking Place. Or you may stand, if you prefer, dumbly contemplating the pitiful brightness of the steel plated subway stairs—brightness worn by millions of tragic, hopeful feet.

Like aisles of darkness under the dense tropic foliage are those subway tunnels, green and red lights brilliant as parakeets in the gloom. Bright as clumps of poisonous orchids are the little newskennels with their coloured magazine covers. Poison, poison to the spirit, the thoughtful explorer may mutter to himself, and stoutly avert the eye. At every turning in the jungle, beside every thicket, or under the huge spreading palm-tree girders of the Pennsylvania trainshed, he may imagine he hears the sudden soft whir of Time's savage arrow, feathered so prettily, flicked into the body of some fellow traveller. The shrill call of the traffic cop's whistle, is it not dreadfully like the cry of some threatening parrot or macaw, perched ironically above the throng? That cry halts even the great pachyderms and the chattering monkeys, all on their way to some Drinking Place of their own. Like a huge yellow python you can see the L train winding among the tall bamboo

groves of buildings. And you must struggle with everyone, even with your own indolent soul, for command of your spirit in that monstrous jungle.

The analogies are terrible indeed! In that frenzy of haste and friendliness, where the traveller must even struggle against his well-loved comrades for the endangered command of his own soul; where silly half-truths are so fashionable and so well rewarded that even the desire to write honourable candour easily grows dim; where sometimes one almost attains the ultimate and most fearful disillusion—that God Himself is in a hurry; in that jungle be wary and be calm, my soul. The whole jungle conspires and rustles with menace; it is thick with beauty and terror; how swiftly the creepers wind you in if you try to pause for reason and peace. Strange enemies, in the loveliest of sleep stripings, lie on the branching limbs overhead, waiting to spring; crouch in the long grass, eager to strike. In that jungle men cannot even worship God without quarrelling about it. The strangest laughters are heard, sounding through the stillness; the lapping of the thirsty creatures is anxiously suspended as they raise their heads and listen to the queer voices of the night.

Magnificent, thrilling, inexplicable wilderness! Chop through it your own little paths, endangered soul; find your own strange hidden waters of refreshment. And pay no heed to any wisdom save

your own. There are the quaintest flutings and voices of decoy. The owl has a beguiling murmur; the adder a shining skin. Be childish in your sullen wisdom, O wandering spirit! It is of this wilderness that some day a book might be written. Yet perhaps it has been written already—the greatest book of our time, maybe, if your mind runs that way. You can always tell when a book is really great—it does become a classic for children? For men, terribly fearing the sharp wisdom of fables, always soften them by pretending they were written for children. It happened to Swift, for instance. And the greatest book of our time, perhaps, is *The Jungle Book*.

Magnificent, terrible jungle of New York! Like Mowgli, you must learn to run with the wolves, and learn to love them, for they are lovable and brave. But be wary, O soul; for there will come a time when you must return to live with men.

IN AUGUST

WHAT is it that happens to the mind in August? It æstivates. In this imperial and drowsy month it retires into a warm, beaming inefficiency. It secludes in the secret splendour of its loneliness. With gently ironic amusement it watches the lively body which now pleasures in swimming, in digging, in all glistening amusement under the heavy sun. Burdened with dreams, the mind has no word. Something in it is dead, visited only by the buzz-flies of fancy, with their green and purple wings.

The sultry ripeness of the earth is too plain a parable. Noon brims over with golden insult, a foam of sunny anger washes the garden beds. Seeds of anger sprinkle in the fertile, speechless heart, seeds for winter flowers. The August mind is too stupid (or, if you will, too wise) to think in words. It receives only feelings. In the thick emptiness of night, dry insects chatter some monstrous creed. Dogs, the determined custodians of human morals, yell sudden indignation through the woods. Dogs are born journalists; their voices are like extras of dismay.

Be patient with the slack mind of August: it is a noble time. Under the powdered ash and rubbish, the spark still bites the knot. Deep in the parallel forest, fancy, the sunburnt *carbonaro*, tends his sullen fire.

To medicine the grossness of August one turns to savagery of physical effort. Cutting down trees, spading roots, cleaning and burning brush in the little tangled lot behind the garage, is rhubarb and soda to the spirit. Having spaded and raked and smoothed, let in the fierce carbolic sun and laid out a small gravel path as *Philosophenweg* (to straighten and restrict the ambling pace of fancy), it struck the labourer that one thing was lacking. The Buddhist, when strangeness is abroad, pastes up his shrine with clean paper to keep the ghosts of his ancestry from offense. But some others (wiser, I think), believe that the only way to placate weird spirits is to invite them in and make them at home. Seeing the little emptiness under the tent of grapevine, the gardener knew then what was needed. A bust of Pan.

A dozen years ago, outside that old stoneyard on Thirty-second Street (the Pennsylvania Hotel was built over it afterward), there was a stone head of Pan on a tall pedestal. It stood in the doorway, grinning queer mischief and frustration. Many commuters, who used to hasten by, must remember the gay and satiric face, the wreath of

grape leaves, the small sprouting horns. When the hotel was built, Pan disappeared. There is one something like him in front of a chophouse on Forty-fourth Street. Some day, perhaps, I shall find Himself. Then we shall dedicate his grape arbour to him—perhaps by reading one of Tom Dekker's prayers in *Four Birds of Noah's Arke*, which Appleton has republished. "That a dramatist of the Elizabethan age," says the Appleton announcement, "not noted himself either for piety or virtue, should succeed in writing prayers so moving and genuine is an interesting problem of genius." Oh blessed naïveté of blurb-writers! When were any genuine prayers ever written save by men with some seed of anguish in their hearts?

But there are shrines greater than mine still waiting for a god. The other day the telephone rang; and in consequence I found myself, soon afterward, in an enchanted place. In the gardens of a François Premier château, on a Long Island hilltop, is a little open-air theatre. Approaching it down long alleys of formal foliage, past rosaries and sun-dials and an acre of fountain pools, with a gradually increasing sense of something important to be seen, you reach the low grassy terraces, empty in the dusk. At the end of the space is a little French *temple d'amour*, graceful stone pillars surmounted by an open dome of dainty iron filigree. Retrieved entire from some misfortuned

French pleasance, there it stands; but the little Venus or Cupid that should laugh within is absent. What a strange feeling of lack that absence gave. Stretching outward on either hand were the fragrant cedar aisles that imagination thronged with bright nymphs and twilight music to do honour to the god. It was a whiff of eighteenth century France, miraculously captivated leagues and lifetimes from home; and if the necessary image were there—one cry of passion among the ceremonies green—old French deities would not hesitate to send their ambassadors. And what a pretty fancy, in the design of those little absurd temples: the open roof, so that even the naked goddess of fable must abide the fortunes of the weather. Perhaps there was also a savoury pellet of wisdom for the mind to chew: after all these lovely artifices of landscape, these parterres and hedges and perfections of floral art—the little shrine was bare. An analogy, was it, intended by the wise seigneur? Does he mean that Beauty will never wholly reveal herself of her own accord, that what we imagine on the altar is more compelling than anything the sculptor could put?

THE OUTSIDE EDGE

THERE is a little pond in a Long Island glade; a pond that will never be again quite what it was when Mr. Gissing used to go sailing on it and thought it was the ocean, for now houses are building near. But it is a pond that has done a good deal of thinking, and there seem to be in it not merely tadpoles but other slipperies just as interesting as tadpoles, shoals of small analogies and parables. There is a big willow tree that sprawls prostrate over one end of the pool and has all the appearance of being dead and naked; yet always in the juicy season it has many green things to say for itself.

Just now the pond is a smooth shield of ice, and while children scuttle about on bendy ankles and accumulate small shocks at the snub end of their spines (this makes them grow, you tell them) you may choose a clear alcove and practise the new skates. One who has, ever since boyhood, used only hockey skates, and now abandons them for a pair of the more fanciful sort (with curly Dutch ends) finds he has to learn all over again. Hockey

skates are worthless except for straightaway speeding and sliding; and how pleasant it is to find that on those new curved runners one can, no matter how clumsily, swing to and fro in arcs and spirals. But, as I say, it requires learning anew; it requires a fresh notion and theory of the business of skating; a quite different balance and purpose. But learning all over again is the life job of the artist, and he who never attempts it is damned.

It is an extraordinary excitement, even for the duffer who has never done more than coast about on hockey skates, to learn that on the new runners he can lean over on the outside edge and find himself miraculously carried round on one foot in a happy spiral. The cunning steel, once you have learned to confide upon it, does not slither but cuts clean and true; the children are too occupied in their own equilibrations to make merry over your tentative antics, your experiments with the spare leg. It requires recklessness to catch just the proper lean and poise: the gesture is obviously impossible, and yet, now and then, it succeeds. You get discouraged, of course; you go home presently on flat weary feet, and think it over. In literature and in art and in everything else, I suppose, it isn't until you get off the flat-runnered hockey skates and lean over on insupportable nothing that you begin to feel the authentic ecstasy and pang. The

people, for instance, who squabble about whether the Ten Commandments should be taught in schools, have never taken off their hockey skates. Was there ever a more delicious episode than that of the lady who objected to the inculcation of Thou Shalt Not Kill among the urchins of New York City? It is pacifist propaganda, she said. She will never say truer word. And the reason is obvious why bishops and statesmen and trustees and editors and managing people of all sorts wear glittering hockey skates. They have to speed with extreme rapidity over very thin ice. They earn their living by keeping people contented and as far as possible preventing awkward questions. But the artist, who lives (at any rate part of the time) by agitating people with unbearable doubts and intolerable intimations of glory, cannot be satisfied with those long straightforward strokes. He must choose some clear corner and practise his perilous grapevine pattern. It is for him as it was for Marlow in *Lord Jim*—

> It seemed to me I was being made to comprehend the Inconceivable—and I know of nothing to compare with the discomfort of such a sensation. I was made to look at the convention that lurks in all truth and on the essential sincerity of falsehood. He appealed to all sides at once,—to the side turned perpetually to the light of day, and to that side of us which, like the other hemisphere of the moon, exists stealthily in perpetual dark-

ness, with only a fearful ashy light falling at times on the edge . . . as if the obscure truth involved were momentous enough to affect mankind's conception of itself.

There, you see, is Conrad leaning over pretty far on the outside edge. There are no hockey skates on *his* feet when he's telling a story. I know people who have read, several times, the first hundred or so pages of *Lord Jim* and have never got any farther because they found, having minds active for analogy, as much to think about as they could carry. The book, you see, like almost every other exciting book, runs into theology; and Lord Jim himself is an interesting symbol of almost everyone who (with the most honourable motives, obviously) hastens to embark in his lifeboat of some creed or set of Commandments and leave the shipload of pilgrims to its own fate. Even the French gunboat that eventually rescued the *Patna*, you remember, had two quartermasters ready with axes to cut the towing-hawser in case she began to go down. . . . It is the readiness of theologians to be first into the lifeboats, the intellectual lifeboats of course, that causes so many nowadays to cry, "What can I do *not* to be saved?" Rightly does Marlow say, in that thoroughly dreadful book, "It was solemn, and a little ridiculous too, as they always are, those struggles of an individual trying to save from the fire his idea of what his

moral identity should be, this precious notion of a convention, only one of the rules of the game, nothing more, but all the same so terribly effective by its assumption of unlimited power over natural instincts, by the awful penalty of its failure."

When the artist leans surely enough on the outside edge, the steel cuts its ringing and perfect curve. It may not be easy for us to say precisely what he "means." For instance, it is exhilarating to find the dramatic critics somewhat incoherent in their comments on Franz Werfel's amazing *Goat Song*, which the always audacious Theatre Guild has produced. I have not seen the play but I've read it and find it thrilling. What does it "mean"? But what does *Hamlet* mean? I don't know that any one ever attempted a *précis*, and it never occurred to me before even to wonder. For when an artist is skating like that, leaning far over on the intangible, the reader's secret comprehensions and anxious intuitions rise up to meet and support him, just as the shifting slopes and poises of balance keep the steel runner curving on its graving arc. When the young student in *Goat Song*, suggested to be a son of Pan, says, "Perhaps I've only had one joy in all my life, the time I saw a forest burn," it may sound senseless, but the poet knows instantly what he intends. So, throughout that strange orgiastic play, Werfel speaks to something which is deeper than any of man's catch-

words. When critics tell you that they don't know what a thing means, sometimes it is because they know perfectly well but don't believe it mannerly to tell. And that, I repeat, is what poets are for: to frighten us, literally, out of our everyday wits; to make us look at the dog on the hearthrug and wonder if he is wiser than we.

Nor is the poet, when he skates on the outside edge, always terrifying or cruel. It may be such winsome and adorable stuff as Elizabeth Mackinstry has given us in *Puck in Pasture*, a collection of goblin poems written and illustrated by one who has the true pixie spirit. It is an ideal book to brood upon some snowy evening when the fire burns low, when the naked trees show their dark crisscross against the dull moon-hazed sky, when the mouse fleets back to the pot-cupboard and the dog sighs on the rug. At such moments solitude seems no longer shameful; your own uneasiness as you prowl restlessly about proves that the elfin world is near. If you sleep it will be to dream fearfully, perhaps; and to startle happily back into the customary world and learn how comfortable (after all!) it is. You have been skating on the Outside Edge.

EXITS

THERE is a building, on a famous corner of the Great White Way, that always seemed to me ideal for any kind of business that might need occasional alacrity and subterfuge. It has its exits and its entrances, lots of them. I have never carefully mapped the possibilities of its lobby, but it has a delightfully queer flavour. There are, I think, three doors upon three different streets; there are two ranks of elevators, there are stairways up to clothing merchants and down to beauty parlours and subways. There are telephone booths, admirably placed for secrecy; there is a theatre ticket agency. There is a soda fountain and a hat-and-shoe cleaning store. And you enter, from Broadway, between a display of imported canes and shirtings on the right, and a row of blithe ladies' bonnets on the left; so that be you he or she you pass inward with an ambitious humour.

So there is this building, and if you go into the lobby and catch the feel of it you will perceive how curious a blend it is of Broadway and of Forty-Second Street. Yes, it is queer. There are some offices in that building for which I have great

respect; there is a lecture bureau which has been visited by some of the most elegant and intellectual English poets; that lecture manager, excellent fellow, once hired me to go to Chicago and talk to a club of ladies; an enchanting adventure. But that was not my first romantic connection with that building.

When I was still very young and drank life straight from the neck of the bottle—seven years ago, to be exact—I used to visit that building often, rejoicing in its volatile emanation of Broadway. A theatrical producer, a gorgeously lovable and improbable person, was putting on a show that another man and I had written. I'm afraid it wasn't a very intellectual play, and it became even less so in the hands of that cheerful producer; but the other author and I maintained (as we do still) that in its innocent hilarity it leaped up toward the farce voltage of *Charley's Aunt*. Both the authors were then in the heyday of young humours —reckless as two Elizabethans in a Southwark tavern. One had already escaped from newspaper toil and the other imagined he was about to. I suppose we were in the same vein of naïf self-esteem that Mr. Bok has shown since he shuffled off the coil of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. Fortune, such fortune as befalls authors of Abie's Irish Roses, was within our grasp, or, at any rate, within the producer's grasp; so we asserted as we lay

awake in small-town hotels while the play was trying-out upstate. In that happy land she trouped to conquer. Those were great nights; no one can know their equal until he has been concerned in a play where Broadway reverses the judgment of The Road.

All that is too long and too jovial a story to be entered upon here. I am talking about that building, where I used to visit the producer's office and gaze with thrilled amazement upon all sorts of phenomena that were quite of another world. Even the producer's private sanctum, as I remember it, had a secret exit, through a small kennel where a young man asserted to be a press agent sat among masses of carbon paper and flimsy. I wish I could remember the producer's telephone girl more clearly; she sat at a very tiny box of electric wires and plugs, she was beautiful and dark, and skilful at knowing who, of the many callers, could be admitted inside the wooden gate that latched with a click. Somewhere in the world of the Rialto that lady must be still in existence, with much less hair and much more experience than then, but still, I'll warrant, unembittered and unamazed. I remember her telling me that *Roly Boly Eyes* was her idea of a corking show. "It's playing at the Knickerbocker," she said; "you better go'n see it, it'll give you some ideas."

I suppose it may have been passing by Bryant

Hall, on Sixth Avenue, the other day, that reminded me of these matters; because our show rehearsed there once or twice (we rehearsed in all sorts of places, shifted around from one rendezvous to another; one that I remember with pleasure was the ladies' lounge of the Knickerbocker Theatre, one was a dance hall on Tenth Avenue, one the dining room of a hotel in Poughkeepsie). And I thought to myself, just for fun I'll stop in at that building and see if old Whatshisname still has his office there. I thought it improbable, in a building with so many exits and a business with so many reasons for using them; but, anyhow, I hadn't been in that lobby for years and I suddenly had a hankering to breathe again its impure unserene. There I had once been very young and new planets had swum into my ken; contracts had been signed and all manner of excitement. A good deal of it had been as irritatingly absurd as Conrad found a London literary journal's reference to a "mizzen fore upper topsail," which is like referring to a horse's hind-front leg—and reminds me of the same excellent magazine's appeal to American subscribers to "pin a Seven Dollar Bill to this blank and send it to us." But in the afterward of time all had simmered into an affectionate ripeness; I even contemplated calling on the producer himself and asking him how were tricks.

The directory of a building like that is as excit-

ing as the index of a volume of short stories; in fact, that's just what it is; it often amazes me that O. Henry made no reference to those little anthologies of chance, which were so much in his "line." I delayed looking at the list of names until I had prowled a little in the lobby, verified my recollection of the various stairways—up to Monroe Clothes, down to Beauty and the Barber. The tingling atmosphere of comedy was still there, though it seemed to me that the building was less theatrical in its tenants and more moving picture. Together with an influx of moving pictures and realtors had come a strange plenty of trade journals on laundering—one of life's queer adjustments, I suppose. I think, feeling so tender toward that building, I shall give you some extracts from its directory. Among Midtown Development Corporations and Oil Burner Companies and Movie Producers I found

The Laundry Age
The Selhose Sales Corporation
Russian Balalaika Orchestra
World Dancers Association
Primrose Realty Corporation
Tagore Realty Corporation
Starchroom Laundry Journal
Shoe Rebuilders for America
Physicians' Research Bureau

N. Y. Horological Laboratory
Del Franco Grape Company
Mitsuboshi Porcelain Laboratory
Mountain Oil and Refining Co.
Harper Method Scalp Treatment
Graingrowers' Guide
Dentinol and Pyorrhocide Co.
Credit Opinion, Inc.
Amelia Hair Co.
Broadway Sightseeing Co.
Ebor Realty Co.

The Ebor gave me an agreeable start. How come that little classic echo? It was as pleasant as finding the Primrose Realty on the river's brim of the Great White Way. The Shoe Rebuilders for America comes a little too close to the familiar stories of trouping to be comforting to any unlucky actor who studies the list. But I am leading up to my grand climax. It sprang out at me among those queerly assorted names. It proves to me that life in New York is just as much an adventure as it was—well, seven years ago. This was the entry I saw:

Elephants, Inc.

So that had to be my compensation, my treasure trove. I went away, hugging Elephants, Inc., to my breast. For, of course, my producer wasn't there. His name was not in the directory.

THE STUPID MAGICIAN

THERE was once a Stupid Magician, who spent all his evenings in a room where he fussed about with his own kind of magic. And in the room overhead there slept three little girls.

These three little girls went to bed at half hour intervals, each taking into bed with her a large and quite heavy doll. So a little later, when they turned over in their sleep—also at half hour intervals, for they were children well regulated in their habits—the dolls would fall out thump! on the floor. The magician would hear them and smile gently to himself. He counted on hearing those three customary thumps. The first doll always fell out about half past eight, the second about nine, the third at half past nine. After that, unless the dogs in that neighbourhood found something to be scandalized about, there was Silence.

I call him a magician with some hesitation, for he dealt in a very humble sort of legerdemain. You mustn't imagine he was clever or important; he was merely a sorcerer in a small way, a clumsy

and stupid one. Yet he had his Moments, as I like to believe we all have; flashes of fortune when he was pleased with his affair and when some modest job of enchantment had come off well. And of course I don't need to tell you that there were parentheses when he was lonely and grim. It is only people with a little sprinkle of despair in them who take up magic as a trade.

His particular kind of magic required, for its perfection, a certain amount of Silence—a thing, in that land and time, more and more difficult to get. In fact it looked sometimes as though there were going to be a shortage of it. Some magicians maintained that it had all been bought up by the Telephone Company, or destroyed by dogs. At any rate there hardly seemed enough of it to go round.

During the day, when Silence was scarce, this magician went about collecting fragments of raw magic. This was not theft, because the magic was all quite intangible and useless; often it only existed in his own mind. It was discarded odds and ends such as the look of tall buildings in a certain colour of morning, a leopard-skin jerkin (worn by strong men in vaudeville shows, leaving one shoulder bare) seen in a sporting-goods window, sudden beauties on a passing face or even inside a pair of stockings, the shinyness of a motor car, or words overheard that seemed comic. Mostly he

got these things very cheap, though sometimes he came upon truth that cost him dear.

He used to take his raw material home, mix it with some Silence he kept there, stir it about in a private receptacle, and presently it came out on bits of paper. Then people said it was magic.

I don't know that he intended it to be magic, it merely began as his way of having a good time; but some cheerful bystanders said it was, he liked the idea and did nothing to discourage it. At any rate there must have been some deviltry about it because people who saw his work were so differently affected. Some said it was too dull, others too bright; some said it's too jocular, others it's too sad. Some said it's not magic at all, just foolishness. And, illogically I suppose, he was most disappointed by those who said nothing whatever.

Sometimes this stupid magician met others of his craft. For there are places where these sorcerers get together, and grumble or laugh outrageously. No one knows just how they find one another out, but they do; I think myself that they have evil ways of recognition when they meet, by unseemly things they say or deplorable habits of disregarding matters that you and I know are important. They gather, and console themselves in their own way, compare notes on each other's incantations and think up new tricks. It is well that they keep to themselves, for their

remarks on these occasions would probably be annoying to honest folk.

And then a disconcerting thing happened. The stupid magician found his magic was changing. Spells he had used before no longer interested him; he wasted his precious time working away at new kinds of abracadabra and sorcery. Some of his clients were displeased. They said they had liked the old sort of thing well enough, why worry them by juggling with new colours and rituals? It's very little use, they said, working up illusions that people around you won't care for. If that's your idea of magic, keep it to yourself. But in spite of their apparent eagerness to please, magicians are obstinate in their hearts; if you want them to work enchantment for you you'll have to let them do it as they please.

Suddenly the magician realized that it was midnight, and he'd been so busy with his infernal broodings that he hadn't heard the dolls fall out. He had missed the three little thumps that meant so much to him. He tiptoed upstairs to see if all was well; yes, there were the dolls, each sprawled on the floor as usual.

And the magician realized that some day, when we all turn over in our sleep—to sleep more soundly still—the toys that consoled us will fall out on the floor and be forgotten. So we had better do our magic now, however we can.

The Stupid Magician thereupon said his prayers, or what he called his prayers, and went to bed.

It's unfortunate, this doesn't seem to suggest any moral. Fairy tales are usually supposed to, aren't they? Though I don't know why; life, the greatest fairy tale of all, doesn't seem to have any.

THE END

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